

PALMYTM PROUD

ISSUE 21



Special
Edition





PALMY PROUD

ISSUE 21

Palmy Proud is produced twice a year and is a brag book of the best of Palmerston North.

All our previous issues are available online at pncc.govt.nz/palmyproud

Let's get social

Keep up-to-date on what is happening in Palmy through our digital channels.

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Cover:

Manawatū Golf Course

Back cover:

Kaitahi Lodge

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Kia ora tātou,

As we head into the second half of 2025, Palmerston North is buzzing with energy. The months ahead are packed with events that show off our city's vibrancy.

August kicks off with Armageddon Expo, a crowd favourite, bringing pop culture excitement to the city. In October, we'll host the New Zealand Food Awards and the New Zealand Young Performers Awards, spotlighting talent from across the motu. Palmy Drag Fest also returns, full of colour, pride and performance. And as the year wraps up, we'll come together for A Very Palmy Christmas and our New Year's celebration in Te Marae o Hine - The Square.

Issue 21 of Palmy Proud arrives with a bonus – a special pull-out that highlights how Palmerston North is leading the way in the nation's food innovation, from cutting-edge technology and resilience to logistics and distribution. This issue dives into the stories and people powering that progress, from breakthroughs in spreadable butter and quick maturing mozzarella pizza cheese. To Eat Kinda, a local success now heading to the US.

Inside this issue, you'll find local stories worth sharing. We spotlight

the golf courses across our region, from Feilding to Foxton. There's a peek inside Kaitahi, a luxury stay tucked away behind Summerhill. We celebrate 50 years of Centrepont Theatre, honouring its legacy and future. You'll read about Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery's tuatara release and our city's efforts in wildlife care. Join us for a tour through Palmerston North's rich military history. We've also uncovered fresh food gems like Tony's Pizza and Hello Sunshine. And if you're after something a little different, don't miss the country-style high tea in Kairanga, where tradition meets a fresh twist.

Whether you're reading this at home in Palmy or as a visitor out and about, I hope this edition inspires you to enjoy all that Palmy has to offer, and maybe discover something new along the way.

Ngā mihi nui,

Mayor Grant Smith ^{JP}
Palmerston North City

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Five-oh and on with the show!

Centrepoint Theatre turns 50 as the only professional regional theatre in NZ.

A 50th birthday is a milestone. It gives pause, prompts reflection, sparks a stocktake of five decades of achievements, as well as plans for the next five.

So, naturally, when Centrepoint Theatre turned 50 last year, there was plenty of celebrating, reminiscing and planning.

For many, walking through the doors at Centrepoint is like coming home – a hug from your favourite aunty that knows all your secrets and loves you anyway. A place of fun, play, silliness; an opportunity to gather, connect, share. A home that has seen tears (happy and sad), laughter, outrage and respect as strangers bond over a shared story, transported to other worlds and times together.

Centrepoint and her stories are woven deep into the fabric of Palmy, a pulse felt throughout Manawatū since 1974. Locals may take for granted she will always be there, a shoulder at the ready when you need a good cry or laugh. But the truth is, it is the last of its kind, a unicorn in the arts industry, the only professional regional theatre in New Zealand. And while, sadly, theatres all over Aotearoa are closing their doors, Centrepoint is thriving.

This is largely thanks to the brilliant women who have been at the helm. Current General Manager and Artistic Director Kate Louise Elliott initially joined the Centrepoint family as an actor around 26 years ago. Before Kate, Alison Quigan ran the show for 18 years.

A calibre cast

Thousands of people have fond memories of their times with Centrepont, including some familiar Kiwi faces. From Rachel House to Cliff Curtis, Mark Hadlow to Jennifer Ward-Leland and many more, the Centrepont stage has provided a safe space for exploration, a major stepping-stone on their way to international acclaim. But it's more than that. Built on three pillars – touring, education and performance – the theatre is just one part of several programmes that engage between 30,000 and 40,000 people across the country each year.

From Basement – a programme targeted at 14 to 18-year-olds – right up to Attic – designed for those aged 65+ – the whole household is welcome. The Outreach programme also delivers immersive multi-day workshops, such as Improv for Everybody and Pasifika on Stage, all run by industry experts champing at the bit to be part of the Centrepont legacy.

There are countless stories of the bonds forged within Centrepont's walls. There have been students who have gone from not speaking at the start of a day to bursting into song by lunchtime, marriages and even lives saved after finding a reason to laugh again after enduring personal heartbreaks. As Kate Louise describes: "Life, inherently uncertain, can find a way of feeling more manageable with the skills practised in the performing arts. They allow us to approach challenges with a sense of playfulness, confidence and curiosity."

With this mindset, it's no wonder that Centrepont Theatre's 50 years have seen more than 400 main bill productions, more than 3,000 actors, directors and designers employed, and over \$6 million injected into the Palmerston North economy. The theatre team has produced more New Zealand plays than any other theatre in the country ... and they're not stopping here.

Setting the stage

As they prepare for the next 50 years, they are committed to playing their part in seeding, nurturing and growing the New Zealand creative ecosystem, sharing their knowledge and experience to magnify the potential of regional theatre right across the country.

In Palmy, the team is gearing up for the next act – a well-deserved theatre renovation. The vision of a larger venue has the team hopeful the future will bring fewer leaks, more loos and as always, the raw and honest stories Centrepont is known for.

We've come a long way from performers changing costumes in an outdoor alleyway around the corner. While the future looks bright, the coming changes at Centrepont will be as you would expect – humble and in keeping with the Kiwi nature the theatre embodies. The plan isn't a total reconstruction, but a much-needed facelift. In other words, she'll still be recognisable, but with fewer wrinkles!

A well-deserved Happy Birthday to our old girl Centrepont. Here's to many more!

"Life, inherently uncertain, can find a way of feeling more manageable with the skills practised in the performing arts. They allow us to approach challenges with a sense of playfulness, confidence and curiosity."

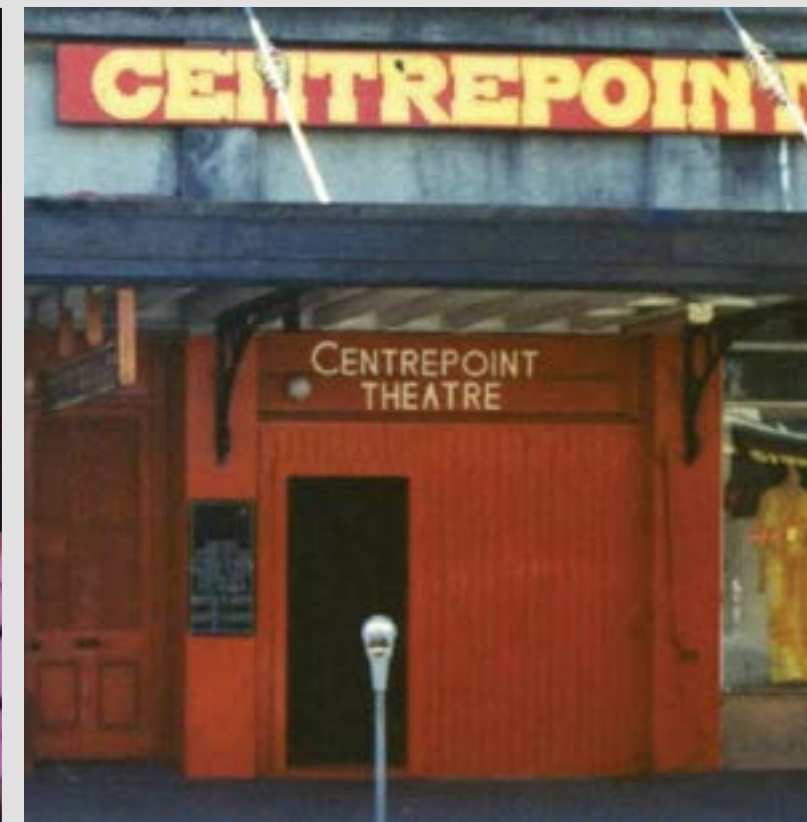
– Kate Louise Elliott



Alison Quigan



High School
Theatre Sports



1970s George Street Location



The getaway GOAT

Heart and soul investment delivers
delicious decadence on Palmy's doorstep.



I've stayed in overwater bungalows in Fiji, soaked in rooftop views in Singapore, and woken to temple bells in Kyoto – but none of that prepared me for Kaitahi Lodge.

It's not just the setting, nestled in the peaceful hills of Aokautere, just outside Palmerston North, it's the way it quietly redefines what a New Zealand getaway can be.

You know those places that look incredible online, but in reality feel like damp towels and disappointment? Kaitahi is the opposite. It doesn't try hard to impress; it just is impressive. Effortlessly elegant. Genuinely warm. The kind of place you want to keep secret ... but also want to tell absolutely everyone about.

I brought my partner along, a rugged, no-frills military guy. I thought I'd be the only one gushing over the experience while he nodded politely. But, dear reader ... he melted. Somewhere between the mango caviar and the hot tub, I lost him. He's now a full convert. "Ambience" is officially his new favourite word.

Where design meets nature

From the moment we walked in, it was clear: this place is something special. Raw, refined and ridiculously beautiful – with natural materials like timber, stone, wool and leather layered in a way that feels effortlessly stylish.

Owners Jazz and Ryan have poured their hearts into every detail. From vintage lamps and antique trunks retrieved from the ocean floor, to lighting that gently mimics a West Coast sunset, it's clear nothing has been chosen by accident.

After unpacking, we wrapped ourselves in blankets on the patio as the sun disappeared behind the lush native bush. With a glass of pinot in hand and the outdoor fire crackling, we sat in that rare kind of silence – not awkward, but grounding, peaceful and soothing.

The kind of silence that makes your whole week take a deep breath.

The food? I'll never shut up about it

Dinner was the sort of meal you try to photograph, then give up because your phone could never do it justice. It began with these blue cheese, pistachio and cranberry spring rolls – crispy, creamy, sweet and savoury, all at once. Then came fresh bread, still warm, with a miso butter so good that I immediately eyed up my partner's plate.

Then came the mussels, topped with blueberry caviar. Unreal. I'd try to describe it better, but honestly, if I could have ordered a takeaway box, I would've ordered six ... hundred. Then the yellowfin tuna arrived, paired with mango caviar. It was fresh and delicate, with the tropical fruit adding a bright, juicy pop that brought the whole plate to life. And the Angus beef? So tender, it made me rethink every steak I'd ever eaten.

Dessert was a matcha panna cotta – smooth, subtle and just earthy enough to land the whole meal gently. Every course was thought through and deeply rooted in place.

Chef Ryan, a genius in the kitchen and a real mastermind in molecular gastronomy, has spent years refining his craft, including running his own acclaimed restaurant. You don't see the magic happening as he's quietly pottering around in the kitchen; you just feel it when it lands in front of you.

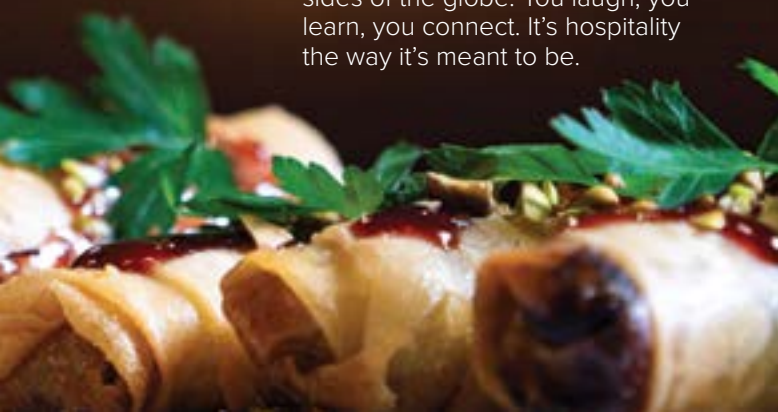


Kaitahi – coming together to eat

The name says it all. Kai (food) and tahi (together) emphasise the communal aspect of dining.

Choose the Chef's Table experience and you'll share the evening with other guests, or even a few locals from Jazz and Ryan's close-knit community who are lucky enough to land a seat when one opens up.

It's a rarity in our Kiwi dining culture – we usually keep to our own tables, our own bubbles. But here, the shared meal becomes the centrepiece of connection. Conversations flow easily, often between people who hours earlier were strangers from opposite sides of the globe. You laugh, you learn, you connect. It's hospitality the way it's meant to be.



Luxury, but with soul

After dinner, we kicked back in the hot tub and, for the 10th time that evening, muttered to each other, "I wish we lived here." As the call of a ruru echoed in the distance, I thought back to a conversation we'd had earlier with Jazz and Ryan. This isn't just a lodge, it's a vision they've brought to life with care and intention.

With years of experience in hospitality and business, they've chosen to take a different path here. They've slowed down to create something meaningful. Their aim is to show everyone, whether they're locals or visitors from abroad, what thoughtful, sustainable, heart-first luxury in Aotearoa truly looks like.

Kaitahi is almost entirely off-grid. Solar-powered. Rainwater harvested and filtered on-site. Waste? Composted. Even breakfast, a beautifully prepared continental spread, reflects their ethos of "enough": nourishing without excess, leaving you extremely satisfied but never stuffed.

The kind of place you want to come back to

The next morning, waking up wrapped in ridiculously soft sheets, on what might be the comfiest bed I've ever slept in, I had a moment: How is this Palmerston North?

I've flown halfway across the world looking for places like this, only to find something better – more grounded, more gorgeous, more peaceful – just down the road. No airports. No time zones. No stress.

A stunning lodge with soul, run by good people, in a place that's quietly perfect. ∞

**Book the suite.
Take the weekend.
Treat yourself or
surprise someone you love.**

You won't regret it.



Fore-get your worries

- the ultimate golf getaway!

Pack your clubs and book a tee time. Palmy is quickly emerging as one of New Zealand’s premier golf tourism destinations.

Manawatū Golf Club:
A legacy of tradition

Nestled beside the calm waters of Hokowhitu Lagoon, Manawatū Golf Club proudly holds the title of New Zealand’s oldest golf club situated on its original course, opening in April 1895.

"We pride ourselves on having some of the best greens in the country," General Manager James Lovegrove says. PGA Tour member and proud club member Tim Wilkinson compared them with some of the finest courses he has played on the tour in the US.

Each hole brings its own magic. "We've had people suggest that the sixth is the hardest par 4 in the country. The 10th is next to the lagoon and has an elevated green, so it can catch you out if your head's not in the game. And the 12th is our most risk-and-reward hole, I think. It's our most modern hole, with it being altered when the old Teachers College was developed."

Visitors are welcome to book a tee time and make the most of everything the club has to offer.

"We have reciprocal arrangements with a number of clubs both in New

Zealand and overseas, and we're also part of the 1895 Club. It's a good idea to check our website or give us a call before you visit to make the most of these benefits if applicable," Wilkinson says. The club hosts a range of tournaments, from the Matariki Ambrose to the Manawatū Open to the Par 3 Competition, which are all open to visitors. It is looking to the future, too, with plans for a digital driving range experience – a first for the Central North Island. If that goes ahead, it will be a huge addition to the region's golfing experiences.

From competitive players, corporate groups, families and those just getting into the game, there's a golfing experience for everyone.

Palmerston North Golf Club:
A course with character and community connection

Palmerston North Golf Club captures the soul of classic New Zealand golf. Established in 1930, this course invites you to challenge your game while embracing the landscape.

General Manager Tama Tanerau highlights the 16th as the course's signature hole.

"The tee shot soars over water, so accuracy is demanded from the start. It's the kind of hole that leaves your heart racing, for better or worse."

The club welcomes visitors to book a tee time and to experience all it has to offer.

"It's worth noting that we have relationships with several clubs around the country, from reciprocal rights to discounted green fees. Check our website to find out more."





Orlando Country Club: Redefining the golfing experience

Just a five-minute drive from the city, Orlando Country Club is changing the way people experience golf. It's fast, fun and proudly local.

Originating from the vision of the Lourie family, it's not a traditional golf course, as co-founder Gus Lourie explains. "We opened as a venue and always knew we were going to include a driving range. But when the opportunity arose to develop a golf course, we embraced it." Renowned Irish golf-course architect Tommy Cushnahan was brought in to design the initial layout.

The golf course is now the project of Gus' son Henry. "We're the only 9-hole golf course in the region. It's currently a variety of par 3s and 4s and we're in the process of creating two new par 5s," Henry says. The experience is a dynamic, shorter game that can be completed in just over an hour – perfect for beginners, families, or anyone wanting to sneak in a quick round in a stress-free environment.

Family is at the heart of Orlando Country Club, Gus says. "We want to cater to everyone. We're a family-run business and love to see people bring their young ones in to have their first hit and fall in love with the game. Plus, with our café, bar and easily accessible driving range, it's truly a one-stop destination for all." While Orlando operates on a green-fee basis - meaning there are no members – it is sometimes closed for private events such as weddings and conferences, so booking in advance is highly recommended.

Rangatira Golf Course: Living the rural dream

Just under an hour from Palmy, Rangatira Golf Club is nestled between State Highway 1 and the Rangitikei River, offering one of the most scenic rounds in the country.

Vice President Barry Lampp explains that this hidden gem is not so hidden anymore. "We're noticing people from all over the country are coming to play. We had the Bunker Boys come and do a video for their social media channels and the bookings went through the roof. We've also been on the verge of making Golf New Zealand's top 40 courses, so it's great to know we are that highly regarded nationally."

With three terraced sections and panoramic views, it offers something for everyone. "It's not a hard course to play. If you're after some fun, the seventh is a fan favourite, a par 5 that goes alongside the road and is right by the clubhouse."

The range

If you're visiting Palmy, don't be afraid to branch out and experience one of the many welcoming courses accessible within an hour's drive. ♡



A grand old Dame



A jewel of Palmerston North, Caccia Birch House is a journey of discovery, both inside and out.

Whether you're a history lover, a dog walker, a photographer or simply someone who enjoys a peaceful wander, Caccia Birch House welcomes you. The gardens and grounds are open to the public Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (except during private functions). Pack a picnic, bring a book, let the kids run free, or simply step away from the busyness of life at this relaxing venue perched above Hokowhitu Lagoon.

Set on nearly three acres of mature gardens and historic trees, this enchanting property delivers a step-back-in-time "country in the city" feel, just minutes from the centre of Palmy. The lush gardens are an experience in themselves. Take a moment under the shade of a massive oak tree or explore through a self-guided garden tour as you imagine how it might have been enjoyed more than a century ago. A garden map is available on the Caccia Birch House website.

Inside, Caccia Birch House offers more than just good looks. Explore the beautifully restored homestead with a guided tour and hear fascinating stories from its past. You will also love the historical displays at the Coach House. This venue also hosts weddings, business meetings, community events and private functions.

All with the charm of a heritage setting and the practicality of modern facilities.

Interior photos: Jet Productions.

Fun facts

In 1908, the house was leased to the Government to become Government House, the official residence of Governor-General Lord Plunket and Lady Plunket, along with their seven children. A fire at Wellington's General Assembly building meant the capital's Government House was being used as the debating chamber.

Beyond being a grand family home, over the years Caccia Birch House has been used by New Zealand Army Staff College staff, the Department of Health as a convalescent home, and education providers.

In 1983, Caccia Birch House was given Category One status with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust – the same year it became a Palmerston North City Council property.

What are you waiting for?
Come on down!
caccia-birch.co.nz





Taking the high tea road

Country Road High Tea is a taste of luxury in the heart of the countryside.

Newly planted trees sway gently in the breeze. Roses bloom amid rows of manicured buxus. A striking water feature glistens beneath the country sun.

Of all the adventures you might embark on that are just 15 minutes from Palmy's city centre, few are as entrancing as this one. It starts the moment you turn off Oroua Road into Country Road High Tea. The walk from the car park to the front door alone hints at the escape to elegance ahead.

As you step through the doors of what was once the old Manawātū Christmas barn, luxury envelopes you. Gold cutlery glints on tables, forest-and-fauna wallpaper draws your gaze skyward and

golden archways above a row of tables lead you into a world where fine dining and rural charm dance together effortlessly.

Country Road High Tea is a family dream brought to life by Tanya Watson (former Watson Real Estate CEO) and her daughters Nicole Mills, Steph Gadsby, and daughter-in-law and head chef Kelsey Upson.

It was Tanya's vision, pitched to the girls a few years ago, that planted the first seed. Together, the family has poured their unique talents — in hospitality, business, marketing and project management — into creating not just any fine-dining experience, but a unique destination and the first of its kind in Manawātū.



“We wanted a place where people could lose themselves,” Tanya says. “Being out here in the country – that’s part of the magic.”

And magic it is. From the luxurious folded hand towels and gold taps in the bathrooms to the handmade dishes crafted fresh every day, no detail has been left to chance.

The heart of the experience is, of course, the high tea itself; a leisurely, delicious ritual rooted in a centuries-old British tradition. The best part? There’s no need to raise your pinky finger unless you want to.

You can choose from almost 20 types of tea, from classic blacks and oolongs to fruit and herbal blends. You can also add a touch of sparkle with a glass of champagne.

A three-tiered stand arrives, laden with an ever-changing assortment of savoury and sweet delights. Picture a herb-infused egg sandwich with glazed ham and vibrant microgreens, or Moroccan-spiced lamb layered with velvety pumpkin puree and a zingy harissa-lemon mayo. Choux bites of tarragon chicken dance on your tongue, while handmade tarts of roasted cherry tomatoes and goat’s feta melt in your mouth.

Then come the scones – so golden and tender – and a symphony of sweet treats, including macarons, lemon pistachio friands, decadent chocolate brownies topped with silky ganache and candied orange, and a raspberry caramel delight that’s as good as it sounds.

Bookings are essential, and rightly so. Country Road High Tea isn’t just a meal, it’s an escape. It’s not just high tea. It’s high tea, elevated. ♡

Instagram handle
countryroadhightea

Instagram handle
countryroadhightea

Website
countryroadhightea.co.nz





Hey, Big Boy!

This living fossil is a hit with the ... visitors to Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery.

This is his rock and this 40-year-old isn't letting a few wrinkles stop him from lounging on it in full public view as he celebrates his birthday – not with cake but with a delicious mouse!

While his history with a camera could rival any influencer, this living fossil's primary role these days is advocacy as a resident at Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery in Palmy's Victoria Esplanade.

Big Boy, who is as handsome and big as his name suggests, was entrusted to the centre's care by iwi Ngāti Koata, alongside his lady companions Toa and Dazza. The tuatara whakapapa to Takapourewa – Stephens Island, near Nelson, where Ngāti Koata are regional kaitiaki.

On this island, tuatara number in the tens of thousands, thriving as they do on New Zealand's offshore islands that are either predator-free or have great predator control. While not endangered, tuatara are considered extinct on mainland New Zealand, where they can only be found in the wild in sanctuaries protected by predator-proof fencing. These reptiles are "living fossils" as the last surviving species of their order. While now only found in our piece of the world, they were on land when Gondwanaland separated 80 million years ago, but other species in their order faded away, mostly because of climate conditions and predation.

Oh baby?

As Big Boy watches over his dominion from his prime position in Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery's walk-through enclosure, females Toa and Dazza are happier to stay close to their burrows. You'll have to look closely to see the smaller females among the foliage.

He is now in a separated area, keeping the ladies free from his attentions. The centre's focus isn't captive breeding, but the tuatara didn't seem to get the memo. As an "interesting" fact, female tuatara can potentially hold sperm for up to seven years. "But it is thought that once it's used, it's used. We'll know in a year if there will be any more babies here," the centre's Education and Programmes Officer Brittany Adams says.

In 2024, the recovery centre was involved in a historic event for Ngāti Koata Trust, when dozens of tuatara were translocated to the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary in their ancestral home of Whakatū – Nelson. Of the 56 translocated, 25 were the progeny of Big Boy and his ladies. Each tuatara got a custom transportation tube for its journey to the sanctuary and was welcomed to its new habitat with a pre-drilled burrow, complete with house number.

Centre Manager Chris Smith says tuatara have no problem reproducing when the environment is good, with no predators and plenty of food. "The issue is that there are not many of those places left in the world."

Lifetime of advocacy

Big Boy takes his role as an advocate for his species seriously – he's been doing it in one way or another since he hatched. "He's gorgeous to look at and he's really active compared with other tuatara. He's tolerant too and not phased with people watching him," Brittany says.

In his earlier years, his image featured in tuatara promotional and marketing material but his life at the Palmy recovery centre is more relaxed. He isn't handled much and is happy chilling out on his rock with his mouth open. "They are ancient reptiles that are pretty basic in their behaviour, they're not show-offs," Brittany says.

As ambush predators, they sit still, doing nothing until something moves past and they snatch out. "They can move pretty fast then. They are also quite wiggly to catch," Chris says.

If you are visiting at the right time of year, Big Boy is usually front and centre and easy to see. "But you'd be surprised how many people don't see him because he is so still."



Baby tuatara



Wildbaserecovery.co.nz

See tuatara in spring and autumn

Unlike Australian lizards, tuatara are not sun worshippers. The best time to see them at Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery is in the fringe seasons, which give the most appropriate climate for them. "They don't like the heat and don't like the cold. Their ideal temperature is 18 degrees," Chris says.

"When it gets cold overnight, that's when they go into torpor [hibernation]. In summer, they seek shelter from the heat to regulate their temperature."

While in torpor, tuatara slow their breathing and heart rate. They don't need to eat or poop "but if it's a particularly warm day, you might see them come out to poop, have a snack and go back to sleep," Brittany says.

Head to the centre's website to see opening hours and learn more about the patient and resident manu – birds at the facility. There is an education programme available for school groups, as well as teaching and learning resources. ♡

No ordinary military Joe

At Palmy Proud, we celebrate the people who make this city special. Getting to know Joe Hollander has been an utter delight for this writer.

I met Joe Hollander through work, visiting the Engineer Corps Memorial Centre museum at Linton Military Camp. What I discovered was far more than artefacts: I found a man whose life has been deeply dedicated to the New Zealand Defence Force and who has an incredible collection of stories to share.

I even stumbled upon a piece of my own ancestry during our time together.

“Visiting the museum was a real privilege,” I said to Joe, and he nodded. He’s quietly hopeful that, one day, this impressive collection will be moved to a central city location so more people can enjoy it.

I’m not exactly a history buff – I need a good story to draw me in. Joe has a fair few of those up his sleeve.

His connection to Palmy began in the late 1960s when he was conscripted into the NZ Army and travelled by train through the city on what he calls “the old rattler” to Auckland. Having grown up in Christchurch, he was greeted at Linton with no-frills conditions: unheated huts and chilly barefoot dashes to the ablution block. It was tough back then and a far cry from the conditions today.

Time with Her Majesty

As he walked me through the museum, I spotted an old photo – Joe, looking a few decades younger, standing beside none other than Queen Elizabeth II. He was one of the senior officers selected to escort her during a 1990 visit to open the new gym at Linton. The conversation, he said, was strictly professional – though his wife, Rosemary, had a very different experience. She had a delightful chat with the Queen about shopping and interior decorating! Apparently, Joe had to politely hustle Her Majesty away from the conversation so she wouldn’t run late. I think Rosemary deserves a high-five for that moment.

Joe had earlier been an instructor at the School of Engineering at Linton and spent years travelling the globe in service. From building a harbour in the Cook Islands, the Scott Base rebuild in Antarctica, Force Engineer in Singapore, to disaster relief efforts in Fiji and Samoa, his work has left a mark across the Pacific. He also spent time with the Australian Engineers in Queensland and worked alongside the Royal Engineers in Europe and in the UK. With all his international experience, it’s safe to say that Joe is, as he says, no Okie From Muskogee.





Army afterlife

He calls himself lucky to have had such a rich experience. The professional development he received in the Army led him into “civvy street”, where he worked at Electricorp NZ, for Massey University and later as an independent consultant. Many of us have heard of an MBA – but Joe was involved in setting up Massey’s executive development institute on the corner of Church and Linton streets and taking programmes into Asia. He helped turn the MBA programme from a \$600,000 initiative into a multimillion-dollar success. He went on to establish their property management organisation and the development of both the Albany and Wellington campuses. Not bad at all!

These days, Joe might be officially retired, but you’d hardly know it. He’s often found preserving military history for the city and at the Linton museum, serving as MC at Palmerston North Anzac Day parades, carrying out duties as a Justice of the Peace, or lending his expertise on various boards and committees. His tireless community involvement is one of the reasons he was honoured with a Civic Award in 2022.

Joe loves Palmy. In fact, he says it’s way better than Auckland – no traffic chaos, everything close at hand and a much lower cost of living. He thinks it’s an ideal place to raise a family. He also speaks highly of the positive community vibe and the strong relationship with Rangitāne, which he sees as central to the city’s growth. When I asked if he’d ever live in Auckland again, he didn’t hesitate: “Never again.” Even the weather’s treating him well here these days.

One of the recent additions Joe loves is He Ara Kotahi – the Manawatu River Walkway – which now extends all the way to Linton Camp. He used to walk or cycle the route and calls it “an absolute cracker”. He was also involved in creating a sign about the area’s military history, which is near the end of Bells Road. His energy for preserving our city’s military history seems boundless.

Getting personal

During my visit, something unexpected happened. In the little chapel beside the museum, I found my grandfather’s name on the Honour Roll. He had served in Italy during World War II. I’ll admit, I had a moment: my throat closed up and the tears welled.

My grandfather passed away from cancer after the war, and now I’m caring for my dad, who is facing his own terminal illness. Seeing that name reminded me how easily memories fade when our loved ones are gone. It made Joe’s work preserving these stories feel even more vital.

Joe Hollander is not just a proud Palmy resident – he’s a storyteller, a connector and a guardian of history. I’m grateful to have spent time with him. And if you ever get the chance to hear his stories, I highly recommend it. ♡



Palmy's next spots to *explore*



Looking for things to do in Palmy that tick all the boxes – creativity, history, nature, tasty eats and a dash of adventure? We've got you covered with this ultimate mix of indoors and outdoors, perfect for whānau time, birthday outings, or simply making the most of our city.

Explore these hidden gems



Splatter Ceramic painting & pottery

92 Princess Street
Palmerston North Central

Roll up your sleeves and dive into a world of colour at Splatter, where paint meets pottery and masterpieces are made. Choose from a wide range of ceramic shapes to paint or try your hand at clay making.

Open Wednesday to Sunday.
A must-do for budding artists of any age.

Caccia Birch House

130 Te Awe Awe Street, Hokowhitu
Palmerston North

History buffs (and curious kids) will love exploring this beautifully restored heritage home. Wander the halls with a local guide and hear tales from a time gone by.

Don't miss the Coach House display and the view over Hokowhitu Lagoon – a perfect picnic backdrop. Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.



Victoria Esplanade Peter Black Conservatory

1 Palm Drive, West End
Palmerston North

Among the hustle of the Esplanade lies a calm oasis – the Peter Black Conservatory. Step into this indoor garden and wander among lush greenery, goldfish ponds and hidden frogs.

Open weekdays 10am-4pm and
weekends 12pm to 4pm.



Lions Mini Golf Victoria Esplanade

1 Palm Drive, West End
Palmerston North

The Esplanade can always boast a great day out for the kids, but now with The Lions Mini Golf on hand, parents and grandparents can enjoy a putt across the generous nine holes. Made specially for wheelchairs with its wide pathways, everyone can come together and learn the art of a hole-in-one!

Open weekends, school and
public holidays from 10am to 5pm.



Apollo Park The Butterfly Park

72 Apollo Parade, Milson
Palmerston North

Hidden in Milson is a secret garden where butterflies flutter and bush tracks twist and turn. Kids can climb the rocket and spot Monarchs, Admirals, and more. The butterflies hibernate in winter, hatching in spring and summer. The best time to visit is early mornings.

Cloud 9 Trampoline Park

37 Taonui Street,
Palmerston North Central

Open late on Fridays and Saturdays, Cloud 9 is perfect for pre-bedtime energy burns. Trampolines, dodgeball, ninja courses and a climbing wall – plus comfy parent seating and an arcade. Open 7 days.

Grab a bite to eat



The Herb Farm

86 Grove Road,
Ashhurst

Tucked away in nature, The Herb Farm café dishes up fresh meals with garden views. Once you've enjoyed your meal, take the kids out for a magical bush walk through their herb gardens and learn what the herbs are used for, spot a fairy or gnome and take delight in watching their faces light up.

Open daily from 10am to 4pm.
A great mix of calm and curiosity.

Barista Café

59 George Street,
Palmerston North Central

Cosy and iconic – Barista is a Palmy favourite. With an amazing all-day menu, indulgent desserts, and wide range of teas to tempt you, it's the perfect stop for brunch, dinner, or a late-night bite.

Open every day, 8.00am till late Monday to Saturday, and 9am - 4pm on Sundays

Beaver & Bear Canadian Feast

3 Campbell Street,
Palmerston North Central

Serving up Canadian classics and local craft beers, Beaver & Bear is a must-try. The Friday food truck is a hit, too. Open for dinner from 5pm to 9pm.



Silky Otter Cinemas

539 Main Street,
Palmerston North Central

Dinner and a movie, anyone? Silky Otter lets you dine in the theatre or unwind in the lounge before the show. Look out for bottomless popcorn Mondays.



Hope Vineyard

156 The Square
Palmerston North Central

This is a locally run business that not only has a café onsite, but you can relax, listen to some music and chat with the friendly team. The cookies are said to be the yummiest in town, so why not test that theory?

Open from 9am.

Looking for things to do in Palmy?



Drop by isite in
Te Marae o Hine – The Square.

Whether you're after a city stroll or something off the beaten track, the team's ready to help you plan a day that suits your style. ♡

Inner city eats

Whether it's popping in for a coffee and a delicious daytime snack, chowing down on some New York style pizza with a craft beer or stepping out for some fine dining, Palmy's City Centre has got all the bases covered.



Hello Sunshine

Hello Sunshine is the perfect name for Cuba Street's newest eatery, radiating warmth with its cheerful white-and-yellow decor and lush indoor plants. That sunny vibe extends to the friendly welcome you'll get from owner Nicole Hogg.

After outgrowing her popular food truck, Nicole needed a larger space to meet the growing demand for her catering and baked goods. Now, her mouth-watering toasties, savouries, pastries, cakes, and slices are a hit with a steady flow of loyal customers—all perfectly paired with expertly brewed coffee and served at wallet-friendly prices.

And for those who love the café's vibrant greenery, some of Nicole's plant selection is also for sale, offering the chance to take home a little piece of sunshine to brighten up your day.

Hello Sunshine
286 Cuba St,
Palmerston North Central



Tony's Pizza

Great pizza and chilled vibes define Tony's Pizza, in Palmy's main Square. Two years in, owner Jack Foston believes they've nailed the formula: giant New York-style pizzas, New Zealand made craft beer and gin, and top-notch service—all in a relaxed, welcoming setting.

"We're all about creating a space where people feel at home," says Jack. With an eclectic playlist, video and board games, and a warm inviting décor, Tony's strikes the balance between quality food and drinks and fun, laid back vibes.

"It's actually heartwarming, he says. "We see families of all ages playing games together grandparents taking on grandkids on the PS2 and groups of friends catching up over frozen margaritas," he says. Even dogs are welcomed with lots of pats and their own basket of toys.

"We've got a great team and we've really enjoyed the journey so far," Jack says. "We love being part of such an awesome community here in Palmy."

Tony's Pizza
134 The Square,
Palmerston North Central





Global Kitchen

With dishes from France, Vietnam, the US, Peru and even Greenland, it's clear why Palmy's newest dining spot is called Global Kitchen.

Owner and Head Chef Grant Kitchen says the concept lets him draw inspiration from every corner of the globe, creating a dining experience full of variety and excitement for both guests and himself.

"The idea came from my travels," he explains. "I spent time overseas watching talented chefs from around the world at work. After largely focusing on Māori cuisine in recent years, this is a chance to tell the stories of my journeys and celebrate many different cultures through food."

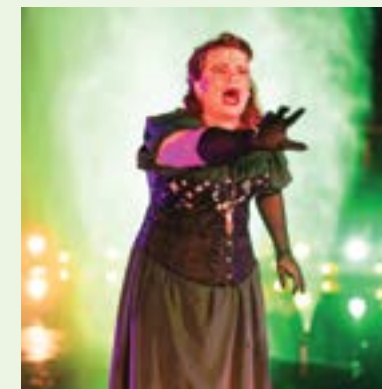
Current signature dishes include Massaman duck curry, Korean fried chicken, beef scotch fillet with creamed pāua and garlic lime prawns, and French plum cake. But true to its name, the restaurant's menu is ever-evolving, with upcoming additions inspired by African and Polynesian cuisines.



Global Kitchen
159 Broadway Ave,
Palmerston North Central.



@awastonemangaweka



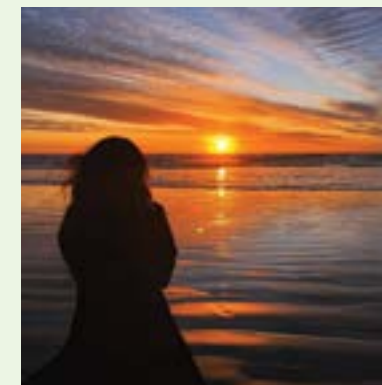
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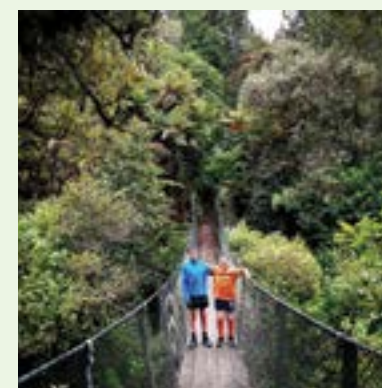
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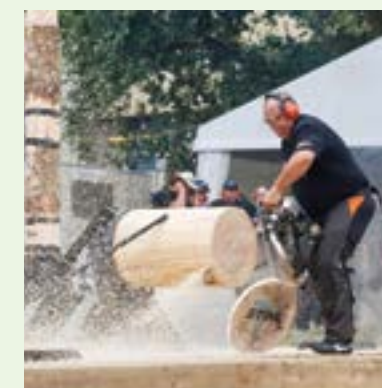
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