

aduki

ANIMAL FREE FOOD AND LIVING

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FREE
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Featuring:

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Tales from the killing floor

The Black Stars show that veganism and rock and roll are the perfect mix

with water tanks and water recycling. Regan and Chris's dogs also embrace the vegan lifestyle. Their reasons for becoming vegan stem back to their childhoods. Both had experiences when they were younger, which made them first question the eating of animals and their by products.

'I remember visiting a farm in primary school and watching a little cow drink from its mother's udder,' Regan says. 'I thought why do we drink from another animal?' Chris had a similar experience when he was five. 'I remember looking at my dog and looking at a cow and thinking if that cow was my dog, well I wouldn't want to eat it.'

Both have been living an animal-free existence for years and like many vegans started out as vegetarians. 'I was vegetarian for years, but had not always particularly liked dairy products,' Regan says. 'Then I read *Diet for a New America* and realised I couldn't possibly eat any animal products ever again.' Chris says it was Regan's influence that made him finally give up dairy and eggs. 'Admittedly I was a bit apprehensive, but soon after the thought of eating anything from an animal repulsed me.'

Veganism for Regan and Chris is a spiritual choice, but also a revolt against the meat, dairy and egg industries. Chris feels he could not live with himself being responsible for the deaths and mistreatment of animals just to satisfy his appetite. He says he doesn't understand people who call themselves 'spiritual' yet still eat animal products. 'Recently I asked some friends how they could consider themselves to be spiritually aware when everyday they were partaking in violent, abhorrent behaviour by eating animal products,' he says. 'Ironically, I get so angry sometimes with it all, that I may appear to be not spiritually developed, I guess that's why I play punk rock!'

Moby, Chisette Hynde, Coldplay's Chris Martin, Morrissey, Siverchair's Daniel Johns, Frenzal Rhomb's Lindsay McDougall and Adalita from Melbourne's Magic Dirt are just some of the better-known rock vegans. To the non-vegan community it may seem a little strange how ethical living can work in tandem with a lifestyle that is stereotypically portrayed as all sex, drugs and alcohol. But, Chris and Regan feel that being vegan and in a band is only an issue when touring. 'It can be difficult on the road as highway fuel stations don't provide many vegan food options,' Regan says. 'If they do, then they're produced by companies I don't wish to support.' So for a rock vegan, touring means a bit of preparation. 'I don't go anywhere without cartons of soy milk, jars of tahini, nuts, spelt bread, spirulina and nuttelex,' says Regan. Chris admits with a laugh that

he is not as organised as Regan. 'I'd like to thank the person who invented falafel rolls,' he says. 'You tend to find places you can eat safely and they become entrenched deep in your memory.' However finding cruelty-free hot chips has been the biggest challenge for the band when touring. 'For example, we were passing through a town and sent Ian into the local take-away shop for chips,' Chris remembers. 'When Ian asked the proprietor whether his chips were cooked in tallow, the guy almost reached over the counter and decked him.'

Being a rock vegan doesn't mean you have to abstain from drinking, but Regan admits some people find that concept hard to get their heads around. 'My mum always says, 'Why do you still drink if you're vegan?'' Regan says. 'If I choose to temporarily harm myself with a couple of vegan-friendly beers then that's my choice, it doesn't impact others.' Chris smirks. 'Oh yeah, we still party,' he says. 'It fits okay into my world and my vegan beliefs are never affected by these choices, they run deeper than that.'

Finishing their beers, it is clear that being vegan encompasses everything The Black Stars do, including playing rock music. 'I am proud of choosing to live cruelty free and I find it the most rewarding part of my life,' Regan says. Chris agrees. 'It makes me stronger as a person,' he says. 'To commit to a belief that is so strong, yet so different from the majority.'

Now that is very rock and roll!

WORDS: Belinda Hogan

The Sydney Cruelty Free Living Festival 2007

Come along to this year's Cruelty Free Living festival for a fun-filled day of live entertainment, speakers, free workshops, cooking demos and films. Special guests this year include Steve Kilbey from Australian band The Church, author Jeffrey Masson, acapella choir Ecopella and Cabaret Arabia belly dancers.

In between films, workshops and performances you can browse through over 40 stalls laden with cruelty free products and delicious vegan food. All major animal rights and rescue charities will be represented so you can also learn how to help stop animal cruelty in its many forms. Free face painting for kids so they can be their favourite animal for the day.

When: Sunday 4 November, 10am to 4pm

Where: Petersham Town Hall, 107 Crystal Street, Petersham

Cost: \$5 donation to charity Animal Liberation NSW

Website: www.crueltyfreefestival.org.au

More information:
call 0400 823 030
or
email jessica@crueltyfreeshop.com.au

'Being vegan is the biggest part of living and expressing myself exactly how I want to,' says Regan Cross, drummer of rock band The Black Stars. Sitting in a Byron Bay café with singer/guitarist and fellow vegan, Chris Harding, it is clear ethical living is paramount in The Black Stars' philosophy. Yes, a rock and roll and a cruelty-free lifestyle can co-exist!

Regan and Chris with vegetarian bass player, Ian Burrell, have been taking the east coast independent music scene by storm since they formed The Black Stars a few years ago. With an alternative punkish sound, The Black Stars first EP *Wasted In Numbers* (2005) was produced by legendary producer Phil McKellar (Spiderbait, Grinspoon, The Dirty Three) and was extremely well received by the indie music media. Regulars on radio stations such as 3RRR, 3PBS, 4ZZZ and Triple J, the band was also one of five finalists at the Musicoz Awards last year. Having toured extensively across the east coast, The Black Stars are now in the process of mixing their latest release *Tales From The Killing Floor* with McKellar again.

Chris explains that although the band is cruelty-free, they prefer not to preach via their lyrics. 'I prefer to allude to my beliefs in music and prefer to be more explicit away from it,' he says. 'However the title of our new EP is a direct and harsh reference to abattoirs.' Regan agrees, 'Preaching is never a good look, I prefer to lead by example not exertion.'

And lead by example they do. Living in solar-heated houses on the New South Wales north coast complete



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