

Bluesfest 2025

Thursday 17th of April

I met up with Mick "Pit" Pittorino at T2 at Mascot Airport as we were sharing a flight up to the Gold Coast. Apart from lots of crowds it was the usual flight. We were met at the Airport by a hired car that turned out to be totally electric! It was quite plush and Ian the owner said he charges it each night which cost him about \$4.80. He says it saves him about \$800 each month in fuel bills. It has the speed pickup of a sports car and about 300km limit – perfect for the job it was doing.



So, after riding the future we arrived at The Arts Factory, our accommodation in Byron Bay. We couldn't access our rooms till 3 pm, but it was way too early to Bluesfest. Apart from that Pit had not booked the bus tickets needed to get out to the festival and they'd sold out – Uber seemed reasonable at the time but would soon shoot up. We'd earlier agreed to go to Byron Music as it had moved to Belongil Industrial Estate so were able to Uber there at a reasonable price. A smaller store than it has been with a smaller range of guitars. Pit had a go at a hollow body Gretsch, which I have the same model at home, but nothing interested me. They did have a big range of cheap Mooser ones, so I brought some.



One place I had wished to visit as we'd bused past to the festival each year was the Stone & Wood Brewery. It was an easy walk from Byron Music. They had a wide range of beers which was totally unexpected and tasting paddles. As well you try little sips of weird beers like the sour ones, or wheat beers. I stuck fairly well to styles I like with the Dark and the Big Ale being the best. Also, the food there is pretty good – we had the Southern Fried Chicken burgers.



We then Ubered back to the arts Factory shocked that the price had doubled in that time! I could have headed off to the festival then, but that would have left Pit on his own till Jim actually started was across the car park in a building called the Garden Bar, so we headed over to check it out. They had some nice beers (Seabass & Balter XPA) that were going for \$5 a schooner and incredibly stunning Tacos at \$5 that were sooo tasty and real Mexican in style. We got to know Jack the friendly barman who is trying to bring back an original blues feel to the bar, along with Nicole from the Arts Factory. There was even a great funk band (Shmoné) that was on at the Bluesfest playing! Jim turned up and we were having such a great time we never made the Bluesfest



The Arts Factory has changed a few rules with a lock out gate after 10 pm and needing a phone to access your room. Otherwise, it's a typical Byron backpackers. One other thing I noticed about this year is the plethora of mosquitos and I left the Det repellent at home!

Friday 18th of April

Woke about 7, then breakfast with the boys at the Arts Factory Café. It's a pity that French chef girl has left as the food was not as good. The echoes of her time at the café still reverberate in the food e.g. the Turkish buns are still used, but the hash brown aren't home-made, etc. So, still good, but not as good. The aggressive kookaburras seem to have taken to dive bombing food like seagulls but left us big blokes alone. We are going to the 'fest early as usual on a Good Friday to beat the crowds which threaten to be big this year.



Well, we were a little later than we thought, but the buses were fairly regular and there was next to no traffic on the road unlike yesterday, so we were quick to the festival. We first had to get our bus wrist bands (\$25 dollars a day now!) then our Bluesfest wrist bands. There wasn't much mud after last week's downpour but there was plenty of dust. First off over to see The Royals, 2024's Grommet Busking Winner at Jambalaya. A good young band who played covers well, but as Pit said "They'd be good to listen to at the local pub." We then went back to get our Bluesfest t-shirts, stubby holders and I also got this year's guitar pick holder. The queues were amazing for this early in the Bluesfest, an ominous sign. As well they'd run out of this year's main Bluesfest t-shirt, which really annoyed Pit, "They'd run out on Day 1. Whose running this shit show?"



Pit had calmed down by the time we'd gotten to the main Stone & Wood Beer Garden. They also had Northern Rivers Beer (NRB) which isn't a bad beer. The NRDB is a great dark beer. John and Linda joined us when the Pierce Brothers ended in Crossroads next to the bar. John and Linda are big fans, but the rest of us are not. While we were there Charli's friend Ainsley turned up to say hello.





We saw the start of Ash Grunwald, who's become quite electronic of late. As Linda said we preferred when it was just him and a stomp box as he was more passionate. We'd missed The Steel Syndicate we'd liked from last year, but got to see The Memphis Three, at Jambalaya, with Frank Sultana, Fiona Byles and Jimi Hocking, who are all part of the Melbourne Blues family. Apparently, they'd met in Memphis at a Blues Convection and decided to jam together. It was a great set



of originals and classic Blues covers. Fiona's preacher husband came out for one of the funniest songs, "Old & Stiff", which he'd said getting out of bed one day and Fiona turned into a funny song full of innuendo. Refreshed by the Blues we ventured further afield to get some lunch – saltbush lamb rolls again, sooooo good!! Then we came back to check out the Melbourne band Fools at Jambalaya. They were so good to listen to.



behind Jambalaya, so we Pit, Jim and I turned up to also costs an extra \$150 a day. We



Then John and Linda let us know that they were at Gordon's Bar joined then for a few gin & tonics. Grant Patterson, a old school mate of say hello. He had an interesting story to tell us about the VIP tent which got some free tickets a number of years ago and it's where the artists hang out, with a bigger selection of alcohol, clean toilets and many tables



& chairs. Apparently, they had no tables nor chairs and the toilets were filthy no being cleaned. WTF? Why would anyone buy a VIP ticket for? Noble has fucked this up as well as the t-shirts. Skimping on the regulars is a sure way to lose them.



One other funny thing happened while we were in that bar. A couple of girls came up to me to ask if I was "Peter?" My first name is Peter, and I use it at work, so I said yes. They then asked if I was Peter Noble! That had us all laughing as I said I wasn't. I'm much younger so I could have taken affront but didn't.

We went off to see some of George Thorogood & The Destroyers, but it was so super packed that we could only just see a side screen. So, we grabbed some drinks and wandered off. Pit needed his Byron Bay Donut fix, while Jim and I grabbed some really tasty empanadas next door from Pipí Cucú Empanadas from Argentina – much quicker line!



We caught the Hussy Hicks at the Juke Joint/Buskers tent, and they were the best we'd ever seen them with lots of guest performers like Minnie Marks, etc Had to buy their new live at the Bluesfest CD. Jim left us there as he wanted to get a good position for Christopher Cross and Toto. Pit and I did catch some of Tom Morello, who definitely impressed Pit.



Then back to Jambalaya to some the last few songs of The Beards, after which we got some drinks. After that we were back for near front row for the Lachy Doley Group, who like



usual were under appreciated, but delivered

We walked past the Delta tent and there Come The Mummies, a brilliant funk rock group mummies. Both funny and also their songs had a the must-see acts last year. Soooooo



120%, real "Conviction"! were the Mummies, or Here who all dress up as Egyptian real groove to them. One of of the festival we'd discovered good!

We started heading out catching a bit of Toto, but we aren't really into "yacht rock". They were very sneaky this year as the bus lines looped beside each other so the lines wouldn't look so long. It still took us an hour and a half to get back to Byron to some whiskey and cheese. Jim turned up about two hours later at 1.15 am.

Saturday 19th of April

Up at 7.30 to wake Jocelin in Sydney as she works Saturdays and is not a morning person! Then waited till Pit and Jim surfaced and headed to breakfast. Had a





very unique toasty with bacon, cheese, fried onion and Bechamel sauce on it – so yummy as they already pre-cooked. Then we walked up to the Bluesfest bus and on our way.

We got in earlier than most and the dust was swirling around. There were big lines still for the Merch tent even at this hour. We made our way to Mojo to see the band 19Twenty with beers in hand. Such a great band who mix covers in their originals.

They told us why as it was due to their

constant touring of small pubs, especially on the West Coast where people would just sit there glum if playing only originals but would spark up if they chucked in the chorus of a cover as well. What was also great was Jules & Lisa from Hussy Hicks joined them on stage.

Then over to Jambalaya to catch the second half of The Memphis three who are perennially good. Then we headed to the Gordon's Bar to get a drink and a seat. We were met up by John and Linda and eventually Jim to have a seat and a drink. Ainsley turned up and it turns out it



was her birthday, so we all sang happy birthday to

her. The funny thing was as each person came in, waiting in a long line, we'd get them to get the next round. We stayed there listening to both Kim Churchill and Ash Grunwald who were good as background music. Ash used to be really good when he was just him and a foot stomp, but the passion has gone from his music.

Jim, Pit and I then left the others to catch Fools, the Aussie band. We wound up front row with me on the fence. They are soooooo good and put on an amazing show with 11 drummers and even two drummers – the drum solo is actually a drum duo! One of the best shows of the festival and a definite find for this year. A pity they didn't have a CD available in the Merch tent.



Then we headed to Mojo, which was so packed for the Melbourne Ska Orchestra who

seemed to be more into audience participation rather than getting into the music, so we came around to catch the last of the Hussy Hicks in Delta. We only caught the end, but John was complaining

about the sound quality again, but he's a man of some experience in these areas.

Then Jim, Pit and I headed over to Govinda's, which hasn't had a food stall for over ten years so are welcome back., We all had the Feast Plate, with Extra dahl and a mango lassi drink. Such great tasty vegetarian food after eating



so much meat in the festival. As I said to my partner, Jocelin, "I've had at least one healthy meal at the 'fest.'" We heard a bit of Xavier Rudd as we ate, but the crowd was amazing waiting for Crowded House two acts later.

Jim wanted to try and get a seat for Crowded House (Which he did!) while we headed back to Delta for C.W. Stoneking. We started off at the

front but were a bit tired so sat down for the later part of his set.

The young ones really go his material with its

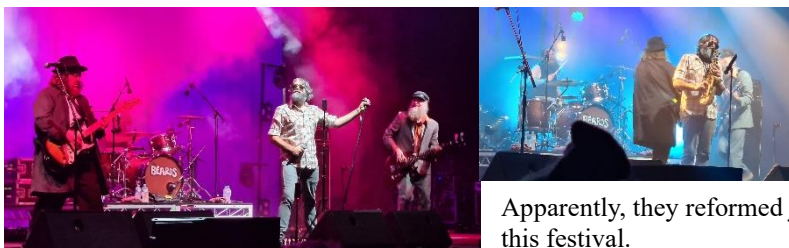


1920's blues feel. I have a couple of albums, but he played songs mainly from other albums. Musically his performances are remarkable as he is backed by a sousaphone that supplies the bass, while a small piano accordion does lead and rhythm. Makes me feel a bit Django Reinhardt in style.

We headed over to grab a table at Casamigos Tequila Beer Garden where they have no tequila, nor mescal! So, we had some Pacific Ale beers instead. It was my shout and while getting the beers I ran into the girl who thought I was Peter Noble again and she asked to take a selfie – feel like I'm famous!

One of the acts I wanted to check out was next on at Delta, was Marck Broussard, but he was playing standard soft blues rock, and we headed back to the Casamigos Tequila Beer Garden till it was time to go over to see The





Beards. Such a great band with songs about beards e.g. “No Beard, No Good”, “If You’re Dad Doesn’t Have A Beard You Have Two Mums”, etc. Very funny with great musicianship.

Apparently, they reformed just for this festival.

We left The Beards after about forty minutes as we wanted to avoid the post-Crowded House rush for buses. However, it seems like everyone else had the same idea and the bus lines were enormous, especially the ones to Byron. It took us two hours from when we joined the line to get back to Byron.

As usual we pulled out the cheese, biscuits and spirits to talk about the day’s events before going to sleep.



Sunday 20th of April

Our Bluesfest Sunday started with an Arts Factory visit by former Society members, Megan & Mark Mittag. Apart from being good friends, I was at the party where Megan met Mark and of course their subsequent wedding. They’ve moved up this way, but I haven’t caught up with then on home territory since 2019’s Bluesfest. Had a great scrambled egg, bacon & cheese on a Turkish bun. Pit & Jim joined us to fight off the brush turkeys & kookaburras who wanted to dive bomb our meals. There’s an easy-going feeling regards clothing at the Arts Factory and a lot of gymnastics as we were entertained by a girl practicing back flips which amazed all of us.



Because of our catch up we were a little late to the BluesFest. However, the shuttle buses are the best places to find out people’s opinions and talk music. The lady who sat next to me in the morning run had a son who is touring in a working band going up the West Coast.

Once we got through the bus wrist band, festival wrist band checks and bag checks we headed to the Saltbush Lamb & Gravy Rolls for another bit of indulgence as well as a beer.



Pit wanted to check out Eric Stang at Jambalaya, but they were late starting late. I headed to the front of 19Twenty in Mojo who were brilliant once again. I stayed for 40 minutes, but it was very



packed, hot and sweaty so I came back to check out Eric Stang and the dancing girls with Jim as Pit had gone back to 19Twenty. A good band, but I feel more suited to bar rooms as they only seemed to do covers.



Then checked out the California Honeydrops, in Delta, with Jim but the band didn’t grab either of us, so we retired to the Casamigos Tequila Beer Garden. Jim went to get the drinks while I tried to score some chairs in the beer garden that was packed. I met a young couple who were really nice, and we joined forces grabbing a group of chairs as people moved off. Jim came back, then Pit, and we had a good chat. Then the couple moved off and we saved the seats for John & Linda. Unfortunately, they were a bit slow, and a group of female footballers came and pushed our bags off the seats just before L & J came to join us. They were extremely aggressive and built like brick shithouses! No guy would be that aggressive as it would soon lead to a fight.



Linda and John did eventually turn up and were able to eventually get a seat. Just in time for a stunning sunset, one of the best I’ve seen. I showed the poor barmaids in the beer tent what they were missing on my really grateful.



Time for more music but today was a Melody Angel in Jambalaya and I got near enjoy the songs. Melody Angel has a great out on the excitement and delivery for



of other acts in the festival! bit tame in that department so we headed over to the front. Pit and Jim decided to sit in the seats to band, with her mother as a backup singer, but misses some reason. Still, her music is way better than a lot

of other acts in the festival!



I’d been past the Museum Of Interactive Effigies a number of times thinking that I could get something for my partner, Jocelin, there. Pit and Jim waited patiently outside while I grabbed a handmade dragon puppet for her – she loves dragons! Very expensive, but I knew as soon as I saw it she’d love it.

Then we went back to Jambalaya to catch some of Lachy Doley’s set, but the tent was packed – yep, the word did get around that he was “the Jimi Hendrix of the piano.” We didn’t mind too much as we’d caught his act on Friday, so we headed into the Gordon’s bar. Pit was busy talking while I kept an eye open for a table and chairs, so when one was free, I grabbed it leaving the line. Pit said “Hey, its your shout!” so we swapped around, much to the amusement of the others inline. I left my backpack with Pit on the table to put on the spare chair, but he gave the spare chair to someone else and let my bag fall on the ground, heavy with Jocelin’s ceramic puppet inside! I was ropable and sooo pissed off. Then I found out I now could only get two beers, so I gave one to Pit & Jim, who was sitting elsewhere then got in



line again. Still irritable I re-got into the long line and waited my turn. Ainslie came up and chatted and she basically calmed me down saying “Its not just the girls who have spats.” So, back to Pit’s table and the lady who had my seat had gone. The puppet seemed okay, but I wouldn’t be able to properly tell till I get back to the Arts Factory (It was and Jocelin loved it, by the way!). Jim came over so the four of us chatted while Lachy Doley played in the background.



Then I said I was leaving as I wanted to get a good position for Here Come The Mummies. We got near the front, but Ainslie wanted to hang back with Jim. So, Pit and I, as people left eventually found ourselves on the front fence for one of the major highlights of the festival! They are so crazy energetic with superb funk rock you can’t help but move. Soooo good! What a way to end the festival’s live experiences! One of the mummies even came out to have his photos taken with fans, which we took an opportunity with.

Ainslie, Jim, Pit and I were having a chat about how good the Mummies were and what were our favourite acts. The Casamigos bar was

almost empty, so I wandered over to grab one last beer. On the way back to the group I ran into a number of the students I teach who cheerfully said “g’day”, but I wasn’t in schoolteacher mode, more party mode! So, I asked if they were enjoying the festival and having a good holiday and rejoined my mates.

We said goodbye to Ainslie and headed homewards, but first Pit need to grab a Byron Bay Organic Donut! On the way past the Merch tent I checked but no Mummies CDs are available on the list, nor T-shirts. It was a looooooong line at the donut shop and I worried that so many people were walking past that we would have another two hours wait. Jim favoured something savoury and the Pipí Cucú Empanadas from Argentina next door had a very short line, so he nicked over to get some. I asked him to get me a butter chicken flavoured one – they are soooo good! I waited in line for the organic donut and when they came out, they were extra good for some reason. We walked to the bus stop expecting a big crowd, but there was hardly anyone there and we easily got onto a bus and into Byron in about twenty minutes – I think the crowd was hanging out for the Hilltop



Hoods.

I checked that Jocelin’s puppet was okay, then it was time for cheese, chips and whiskey as we discussed the day’s events. We’d run out of biscuits, so cheese and chips was the next alternative and worked well! So tired and had an earlier night.

Monday 21st of April

Up at 7 to pack, complete my diary then wake Jim and Pit to get them to breakfast at 9 as we had our airport transfer at 10 am. Tried to get the same breakfast I had yesterday, but got fairly close.



Then back to do the final pack before we checked out with Nicole, our barmaid from Thursday night who was a fun character. Pit was still asking if we could get a later pickup as the checkout was 11 am. It was lucky we had a 10 am pickup as Llama, our driver, told us a truck had overturned on the freeway so a 45 minute journey to the Gold Coast Airport turned into an hour and forty five minutes as there was traffic jam on the back roads as well due to the end of Easter break, school holidays and the ending on the Sunday instead of Monday.



such a big Bluesfest

she was

When we reached the airport, poor Llama had to race off to pick up another passenger running late for. After booking our bags through, doing the security and having a cup of tea we made it onto the plane. Sustenance came from an egg & lettuce/salad & cheese sandwiches mix washed down with Byron Bay beer. The flight was okay except for a lot of strong turbulence coming into land. Pit got picked up by his wife, Ellie, while I cabbed home. Another end to an enjoyable festival. A big storm had gone through Byron after we’d left, the first rain in a week of sunshine. No rain for the festival so Peter Noble would be pleased.



Conclusion

What are our conclusions after the 2025 Bluesfest?

1. There have been improvements in the organisation of the buses, which is pretty obvious. There are some suggestions of flexibility as when a large portion of the crowd left before Crowded House’s finish the buses were slow to respond. If they had two big bands staggered each night, then there would be less crowding. They used to do that for this reason.

2. The last Bluesfest?? This has come across to nearly everyone I spoke to in buses, bars, queues, etc We all wondered about this as the act quality is not how you’d like to go out with a bang. We heard at the Art’s Factory Garden Bar that Peter Noble was already signing acts for next year. The John Chesher said they were advertising next year’s tickets. There are a large number of rumours spreading around the Bluesfest patrons including:

- a. That its amalgamating with Splendour so that more acts will appeal to the younger crowd – notice acts like Tones & I, or the hip hop acts on Crossroads.
- b. That its moving to Queensland as the NSW insurance is the cause of all the festivals closing and the people of Byron what it gone.

Why doesn't Peter Noble respect the Bluesfest patrons? Come out and apologise for saying it's the last Bluesfest or thank your fans for saving the Bluesfest. Something! We are not just here as a money-making exercise you know. Its obvious that Noble knew it wasn't the last Bluesfest as all the T-shirts don't allude to that prospect.

So many people have said they will not be coming back next year as they are pissed off by Noble's con job. Only one of the many I interviewed said they would be returning next year. I did hear one announcer saying how we'd saved the Bluesfest, and I heard Peter Noble has been granted half a million dollars on Easter Sunday. Someone else said the end of the festival was leverage on the Government. However, I wonder if the backlash from the patrons next year will be wild. Noble better get some great acts to attract the patrons he ignores so much.

3. The quality of the acts. Similar to the last few years the best acts are from previous festivals e.g Here Come The Mummies, The Beards, 19Twenty, Lachy Doley Group, Fools, etc. In fact, we had ticket for the Thursday night of the Bluesfest but the range of acts were so poor or repeated many times later that we stayed at the Arts Factory Garden Bar with \$5 schooners (Balter, Seabass, etc), \$5 Tacos of superb Mexican food, a band that played at the Bluesfest (Shmoné – one person the bus said they thought they were the best band at the festival so far.) that played for three hours. Plus, we didn't have to battle to get on the buses at the end. We'd seen the traffic and heard about the crowds at the Bluesfest. Even though there were many Australian acts where the big legend crowd pullers like Cold Chisel are, Living End, Hoodoo Gurus, Midnight Oil, etc. This was a big complaint from many people I talked with. Pit and others said "Missing usual Blues acts like Blues Acadia, Backsliders, Hat Fitz, Chain, etc More local acts for Blues. More local Australian artists." The only real Blues act was The Memphis Three who were great! Other patrons said "No highlighting Aussie acts. No promotion of Australian acts – remember how popular 2022 was. "Could have put on one or two major Australian acts. Would have raised the excitement level – people in the long bus lines were very non-plussed. Lack of effort and maximum money taken on false advertising. Probably the main grip everyone had." Pit also said "Very evident the last day "lack of respect" due to "covering ground" with few new acts"

4. The organisation of the performances. Sooooo many people complained about the George Thorogood performance at the Mojo stage as it was packed out with an external screen not having any speakers and there was next to no sound. It really come across as though Noble wasn't properly prepared for such a big crowd. The crowd for Crowded House was unbelievable. I've been going since 2001 and I've never seen the festival that crowded for one act. As I said before, if you have two BIG acts staggered it splits the crowd and if they have different endings helps with bus organisation and timing. Luckily Pit and I are attending a ZZ Top & George Thorogood gig at Darling Harbour in a few weeks, so it didn't matter to us. I remember one girl almost crying who was a big George Thorogood fan as she missed out and it was the main reason to come to the festival!

5. The organisation of time: The festival used to start about 12 noon and finish about 12 midnight, but we've noticed that the timing of the acts have been cut back and now missing a day. However, the prices have gone up yet again for the festival. This sounds like a lot of commercial companies to give less but expect more. A big pack of chips has less than the old medium size. People are not stupid, and it builds resentment.

6. Sound organisation: As usual the set up was pretty good, although a tent return in the form of the Busking Tent as the Juke Joint is a bit of a con. The sound people on that stage were amazing! Husky Hicks sounded the best I've ever heard them, and I've been a fan for over ten years. Then we heard them play in Delta the sound person must have a hearing problem! One of my friends, John, has much experience with sound engineering and quality of major Australian bands in his time. He sent Hussy Hicks a warning that the sound was terrible as he knows how good a band they are. They replied back that they knew this, and it was a lot better the second time they played at Delta. This has been a perennial problem for years where bands like Missy Higgins bring in their own crew and sound brilliant while lesser acts have to put up with badly trained TAFE students. Punters pay good money to hear the acts at their best. Quality not quality is the message to Peter Noble.

7. Amenities: I was surprised when using the male urinals that they had half the number of troughs for some reason so there were line ups to use them compared to previous years. Urinals open up the sit-down toilets for more female use. Having mixed toilets also opens up those spare for female use. In the old days of separate male and female toilets a lot of women would use the male sit downs due to the waiting time. I think they need more cleaning time as they can get quite dirty and run out of toilet paper even in the first fe3w days.

8. VIP Tent: Pit, Jim and I wound up with a one-day VIP pass lanyard, about 15 years ago, due to them staying with one of the blokes from one band. I remember that the VIP place had many tables & chairs, cleaner toilets and a wider range of drinks with some of the acts drinking. However, it was extra to go there, this year \$150 a day, which is a lot of money. One of our mates joined us with stories of what's in the VIP room as he spends that extra \$150 a day to go there. Apparently, there are no tables and chairs and people have to sit on the floor, and the toilets aren't very clean, and he didn't say about the drink range. Patto was so pissed off and felt ripped off. We warned several people we heard were thinking of getting a VIP pass about what was happening. Peter Noble has got to stop treating his customers with so little respect. No one will buy a VIP ticket if they are no getting something extra for the value. Once again, Peter, your patrons aren't that dumb! We are not Trump supporters!

9. Food stalls: It's brilliant that Govinda's is back after so many years. Their Feast Plate with extra Dahl and a mango lassi was so filling and tasty! Especially as none of us are vegetarians, but we love good food! Even though Rio's corn is still sadly missed there is another place selling grilled, butter corn – yummo! We really enjoyed the Saltbush Lamb rolls with gravy (And mint sauce) again this year a few times. The quality of the lamb they are using is stunningly good. I've had lamb rolls at places like Charcoal Charlie's where they literally stuff the roll, but the meat quality isn't as good as Saltbush Lamb rolls! I know as I grew up on a sheep farm, so I know the taste of good quality lamb and they have it. I probably ate there about three time in the festival.

10. The Merch Tent: Good and bad here. The bad is running out the main Bluesfest t-shirts on the first day! Luckily, I preferred the green one with the tents on it, but it does show poor organisation. As one punter said to the Merch tent staff when hearing that the t-shirt has run out early Friday morning said, "You do know what you are doing, I hope?" Pretty piss poor organisation as they knew how many were coming along and to run out on the Thursday means someone is definitely not doing their job properly. As I said, I got the ones I wanted, but many others were disappointed. Even early on Friday morning the lines at the Merch tent were exceptional. I thought it was due to it being Good Friday which usually gets super crowded, but it was like that every day. One good thing which appeared on the Saturday was a list of CDs and vinyl that was available. Somebody used their brains there and should be promoted! So many people waited in long lines to see if a CD, or vinyl was available only to find out they don't have them.

11. Alcohol: The prices for the drinks have always been outrageous where you pay \$15 for a \$3 can of beer, etc. I've heard its to reduce the punters alcohol intake, but it's really a money-making venture. The Arts Factory Garden Bar with its \$5 decent beers is a much more appealing prospect, especially if they have great bands like Shmoné playing.

12. Missing In Action: These are things that have been in previous Bluesfests that used to heighten the experience:

- a. No CD, or Vinyl, tent. Okay a lot of people use mp3s these days, but equally a lot of people aren't faddists and prefer the quality of a CD, or vinyl. Note the number of CDs being sold now are rising exponentially as mp3's are great for carrying around but are poor in sound quality, with less of the disadvantages of vinyl.
- b. No artist's signing tents: Okay, this might be a left over from the CoVid pandemic, but most artists want to get to know the fans. This works in well with the CDs as the you can get them to sign while chatting with the artists. That connection between the artists and fans was one of the special things lost in recent years adding an edge of coldness – us and them so of thing. One of the Mummies came out to meet and greet the fans so they could feel more connected. It was sooooo good and another reason I really like the band! They like their fans! Dog Trumpet did the same thing last year.
- c. No music between acts like they used to, even last year. It's a small thing but a lot of people are up close and waiting for the next act. Keep them entertained.
- d. No wine bar this year: It was great the few years it existed, although with the number of people attending it might have been a problem. Gordon's bar was good but lacked many chairs and could have had more high seats. It was a super sunny and hot festival so more shaded places to drink would have been good. Most of the bars seem like after thoughts. The ones like Casamigos Tequila Beer Garden were better as they had a lot more seating and were not connected to the bar like Gordon's

Overall, we all did enjoy the 2025 Bluesfest and are happy that it will continue. However, not everyone will be returning as they'd taken special permission from wok as this would be the "last Bluesfest". If it happens again next year people are going to ignore it as in the boy crying "Wolf". Not 100% sure I'll actually go myself! As of the 8th of November, there have been no artist's announcement for 2026 which is a bit strange. Like most people we want to see the quality of the acts before we lay out our dollars. Then again, it's been so long for the announcements I have promised to stay with Jocelin over Easter next year. Maybe the 2025 was the last Bluesfest? Who knows, only the future will tell.