

March into Melbourne Festivals

From food to fashion, wine to wheels, festival fever sweeps the state this month. *By Christine Knight*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: THE MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW, CAMILLA AND MARC, THE VIRGIN AUSTRALIA MELBOURNE FASHION FESTIVAL, ANTHEA LOUCAS BOSHA, CEO MELBOURNE FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL, PHOTO: JASON LOUCAS; HEINEKEN VILLAGE STAGE, PHOTO: 2018 AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX CORPORATION.



MELBOURNE IS THE PLACE to be this month, as it plays host to a series of iconic festivals across the state that celebrate food and wine, cutting edge fashion, beautiful flowers and fast cars.

Major festivals include the Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival, Melbourne Food & Wine Festival, Australian Grand Prix and Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show.

The Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival (vamff.com.au), running from 1 to 10 March, is Australia's largest fashion event with ten days of fashion and entertainment across the city, celebrating style and creativity on the runway and beyond.

Visitors can enjoy a series of fashion-focused events such as world-class runway shows featuring Australia's established and emerging designers, state-of-the-art productions, beauty workshops, live entertainment and much more.

In 2019, the Festival will hold the inaugural Australian Fashion Summit on Friday 8 March, International Women's Day. A breakfast has also been scheduled to discuss and celebrate women who promote social, economic and cultural change for women's rights with a fashion lens.

The Melbourne Food & Wine Festival (mfwf.com.au) takes place across the state from 8 to 24 March, offering Festival-only experiences that celebrate eating and drinking in Victoria.

Not to be missed is the 2019 Bank of Melbourne World's Longest Lunch on 8 March to help celebrate International Women's Day, where food legend Karen Martini will lead an all-female chef line up to serve over 1600 diners along 500 metres of table in Prahran's Victoria Gardens in the City of Stonnington.

Iconic Melbourne hot spots are also hosting events, including Pasta Pasta Pasta at Tipo 00, Anarchy at Attica, Sauce Day with Neil Perry and Carnevale at Trattoria Emilia.

On the Festival's opening weekend, an immersive three-day takeover of Melbourne's Malthouse Theatre, The House of Food and Wine, will be a premium drinking and dining destination featuring top local and international chefs demonstrating their dishes, tastings and entertainment, workshops, food trucks and a daily Asian street food collaboration.

Other highlights include the Global Dining Series where top Australian and international chefs will take over the pans at some of Melbourne's most loved restaurants, The Village Feast in the tiny Gippsland town of Jindivick, the Crawl 'n' Bite presented by Victoria Harbour and Restaurant Express where some of Melbourne's best restaurants are offering two courses and a matched beverage for only \$40.

The Formula 1 2019 Rolex Grand Prix (grandprix.com.au) from 14 to 17 March brings the excitement of fast cars racing at speeds of over 300 km/h to the Albert Park Grand Prix Circuit, and features the world's biggest motorcross stars including Lewis Hamilton, Sebastian Vettel and Australia's very own Daniel Ricciardo.

The launch event celebrating the start of the 2019 FIA Formula 1 World Championship will take place on Wednesday 13 March, offering fans the opportunity to see all twenty drivers and ten team principals descend on Federation Square together to open the season for the first time in the sport's history.

During the Grand Prix, fans can drop by the interactive Heineken Village where they can enjoy performances, the F1 Fan Zone, motor shows and kids' corner.

The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show (melbflowershow.com.au) will entice visitors with its sweet scent between 27 and 31 of March. The Southern Hemisphere's largest horticultural event brings a together Australia's most respected horticultural and floral designers in a series of immersive experiences that include DIY workshops and installations such as a "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"-inspired indoor plant feature, an installation of a mystical palace fallen into disrepair and overgrown with plants.

Enjoy the spectacular floral display at the Landscape Design Show Gardens, meet local growers, admire art and purchase home-grown blooms and gifts from the Royal Exhibition Building's Gallery Precinct, create a masterpiece at the Melbourne Flower School, dine on petit fours at the Holland America Line High Tea and visit the Landscape Advisory Centre to consult professionals on your own garden.