



A meat & fish-free future for Shambala Festival



SOPHIE BAILEY

Bristol is the home of the Shambala Festival team: a pioneering music and arts festival that takes place across four days on the August Bank Holiday Weekend at a secret location in the Northamptonshire countryside. This year they're making a pretty bold move, and one that has divided their followers across the board: to not actively sell meat or fish at the festival. Here's why they're doing it and what they hope it will achieve.

At Shambala, we have always endeavoured to find ways to reduce the environmental impact of our festival. Over our 17-year history, we've ditched disposable plastics, introduced sustainable travel initiatives and become 100% renewably powered. But when it comes to the next step in our quest, to combine the best party with an absolute commitment to the future, we can't help but feel there is a big, meaty elephant in the room.

Consumption of meat is a significant cause of environmental damage; as well as land degradation, deforestation and ocean pollution. The meat industry is responsible for more greenhouse emissions than the combined exhaust fumes from all global transportation. It's also becoming more widely accepted that it's unhealthy to consume meat in the way that we are.

So this year we're setting ourselves a challenge: to provide the most eye-popping, mouthwatering, colourful, hearty array of cuisine at Shambala 2016 without a single bit of meat or fish on sale. Not a sausage. Instead, keep your eyes peeled for insect dishes, Bacon Lovers Anonymous support groups, luxury dining experiences, a range of delicious food from around the world, debates, talks

and creative exploration of the wonderful world of food.

Shambala HQ is a mixed bag, with vegans, veggies and meat eaters co-existing harmoniously together, but the whole team agrees that it is important to be bold with our environmental stance, and encourage this debate.

Meat lovers, you can choose to bring your own meat onsite if you wish. But with an amazing range of tasty, colourful and hearty veggie options on offer from our cafés, we hope you will be surprised not to miss meat for four days.

We absolutely recognise that when looking at modern agribusiness, and the issues around meat production, dairy products are very much part of the conversation. However, we feel that going meat free is a significant and bold enough first step, and that we need to balance the Shambala experience with positive changes and familiarity, and make sure that the energetic time we have is fuelled with enough calories – we can't all suddenly adopt a completely new diet overnight – we're here for the party right?!

And since you're probably thinking it, we do also realise that organic farming isn't the only answer to the global problem, as it uses more land than other farming techniques, and does not address the fundamental resource intensity. But for local ecology, animal welfare, health and provenance, it's a step in the right direction for what we do choose to consume.

We already have a strict food sourcing policy for all providers onsite, which includes local, regional and certification guidelines. We also work with vetted local wholesalers to supply to our cafés. As part of our minimum standards for cafés, and the Green Traders Award, our green

team check that everything is as it should be onsite, and we support food providers pre-event. In 2016 as part the meat-free decision, we will be working even more closely with cafés to ensure we have an ever-increasing awareness of food provenance.

To help meat-lovers forget about their carnivorous desires, Shambala have introduced a new venue for this year: The Garden o'Feeden (www.shambalafestival.org/food-glorious-food/), curated by Ed Gillespie of sustainability communications company Futerra. Step inside this sumptuous banquet hall and let your taste buds be tantalized by one of our championed chefs, or choose a plant-based dish from one of our carefully curated traders.

If it's food for thought you're after, make yourself comfortable and listen to a talk from one of our foodie experts, or make your voice heard and join the great meat-free debate (www.shambalafestival.org/meat-and-fish-free-for-2016/).

You can even don an apron yourself and pick up some tricks of the trade as the tent turns into a hands-on cookery course. Follow our brand new food trails around the site, or even book in to our fabulous supper club, and sit down to a proper-right-good-meal, that would give any fancy pants eating establishment a run for their money.

We really hope our audience will come with an open mind and embrace our challenge for one weekend only. To quote Ed Gillespie: "we are all environmental activists three times a day, and with every mouthful we shape our world. Please use the power of your appetites wisely!"

Head to the Shambala website to find out more about the event:

www.shambalafestival.org

“Made by Rebels, Shipped by Pirates, Drunk by heroes.”

ANTON MANN & LELA McTERNAN-MANN

This is the informal motto of independent Portuguese wine importers Xisto Wines (pronounced *She ees toe*) Xisto is the name of the slate and shale rocks on which many of the Portuguese vineyards are planted) When you talk to husband and wife team Anton Mann and Lela McTernan-Mann about what they do, you discover it's all about the journey, the values, and doing things differently. “We want to lead people out of the supermarkets, encouraging them to be a little more thoughtful of the provenance of the contents as well as the bottle itself”.

At the heart of it all is the import of great wine from Portugal. The promise of Xisto is that their wine is imported by the most sustainable route possible. *“The journey to zero waste will always be imperfect,”* says Anton, *“but we do the best we possibly can.”* And that includes, once the wine arrives in Bristol, running the delivery van on bio fuel – oil collected from local restaurants and taking the bottles back to refill them, even making tapas dishes from the empties.

HUMAN-SCALE

Back in Portugal the wine producers are using ancient, sustainable practices passed down through generations of families, not necessarily certified organic (unaffordable to many small-scale producers), but using organic practices with minimum intervention.

The human-scale is important too. *“The grapes are hand-picked and foot-trodden,”* says Anton. *“We work with small, up-and-coming wine producers in Portugal.”* The relationships they develop are about honour and integrity. *“We go and visit them; meet them personally. It all starts with conversations, often with a glass of wine. We know the grape's provenance – when I'm introducing the wines to a seller in Bristol I say ‘wanna speak to the wine maker? I can ring ‘em up if you like.’”*

Anton and Lela know the stories of all their producers. The organic vineyards of Darei in the Dao region were established by the family so along with their animals and crops they could create a sustainable life style where they knew exactly where everything they put in their mouths came



from. It's an incredible place. There's wine from Claustru's – it's the oldest co-op in the Douro (the grapes are all hand-picked because the slopes are too steep for vehicles as is more often than not the case in Portugal). *“The producers used to send their grapes to Porto but they got badly paid so in the 1950s they got together and formed the co-op, decided on a fair price for the farmers and built their own winery.”* There's the young wine-makers who go out into the world and bring new skills back to their families to add to the old, and some of the best-selling wines from family businesses headed by women, challenging the macho-tendencies of the industry. Lela and Anton know them all.

The couple's attitude to the traditional wine trade is one of slight irreverence – they are absolutely not earnest, not snobbish and not pompous. Anton says *“I grew up in Henbury. And I grew up liking wine and being mildly mocked by my mates for it. I found it odd that there was a class divide – a bit silly.”* Lela adds *“I just don't want my friends to get red faces! Grapes should be the only ingredients of wine,”* she adds, *“but some wines have lots of added extra ingredients, some of which don't even get listed. Real wine doesn't turn your face red.”*

CRAFT WINES

Like craft beer, seasonal food and the slow food movement, Anton and Lela think it is time to recognise craft wine, from small-scale producers. *“Good things*

take time, and when the last bottle has been drunk it's finished until next season. And that means every vintage is different. We want people to look forward to next year.”

“When I go to wine shows in London,” Anton continues, *“some want the same thing – what's new? What's cool? What's this year's thing? We're about the slow – we like this guy's wine, we've visited him, maybe met his family – there's a human connection. And we believe the wine is so good and the journey so exciting that people who drink it will become our ambassadors.”*

CARBON-FREE ADVENTURES

There is a second part to the business – more maverick, more innovative. Wine produced through collaboration between Anton and innovative wine-maker Mateus Nicolau de Almeida (Renegade Wine Maker of the Year and Young Wine Maker of the Year in Portugal in 2014). They make and blend it together, so it is absolutely unique to them. Port O' Bristol is also 'purely-sailed, fuel-free wine.' If you're talking about the journey, then the carbon-free adventure this wine has come on is a tale worth telling.

The first Port O' Bristol wine, made by Anton and Mateus *“using our own hands”*, was bottled in Douro. It was loaded onto the Tres Hombres for its maiden voyage in 2013, starting from Lisbon, then spent six months sailing the Atlantic (*“sea-aged”* quips Anton) before arriving in Falmouth 2014.

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