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Why comedian Jenny Wynter is hooked on chooks

Jenny Wynter May 13, 2021





📷 Ben's Chook Races at the Tambo Hotel in Queensland are an experience you can't miss. Picture: Supplied

I never knew how much my life had been missing 'bet on a macaron-coloured chook race' until I did it. It was so good that I coined a new term: the retrospective bucket-list.

better about achieving things and (b) account for the magical wonders you never even would have dared dream about.

Of course, when lockdown hit in 2020, ALL bucket-lists seemed to be off. And as a comedian, that seemed to include the innocent “bucket-list item” of “having a career”. After months of rocking in the foetal position singing “Nobody Knows the Troubles I’ve Seen”, to my shock and delight I received a phone call in mid-August to the effect of: “Queensland restrictions lifting... want to get shows on the road... can you leave in three weeks?”





 Jenny Wynter and her husband Jon Wilson explore the Lara Wetlands. Picture: Supplied

After homeschooling my kids in lockdown for months, my legs made like the Roadrunner in Looney Tunes and pinged me the heck out the door.

So there we were. Me, my husband (tour manager and tech extraordinaire) and two hilarious co-stars, Jasmine Fairbairn and Carolyn Mandersloot, hitting the road for a 3200km whirlwind tour with The Funny Mummies Comedy Gala. Picture Hunter S Thompson if he were (a) three women, (b) relatively sober and (c) compelled to occasionally feel guilty about his dependants back home.

By night, we performed show after show in regional [Queensland](#) in towns like Goondiwindi, Blackall, St George, Cunnamulla, Quilpie, Stonehenge, Barcaldine, Tambo, Charleville and Roma.





 The iconic welcome sign at Blackall, Queensland. Picture: Jack Harlem

By day, we were avoiding hitting cattle and kangaroos (or as they call it in the country, “driving”). And I can’t even tell you how marvellously superior you feel when you can simply memorise travel directions: “Drive straight for 476km, then the destination is on your left.”

We made friends quickly with artesian water bathing, learning the poetic life lesson that it is only when you surrender to the water that smells like farts that your hair can achieve true softness.

We discovered the wonder that is fossicking. I’d only encountered the word once, in a year nine English comprehension test. I figured it meant something like “frolicking”, but perhaps involved stones. I wasn’t that wrong.





📷 There are all kinds of treasures in outback Queensland. Picture: Supplied

My preferred “fossicking”, however, was in the regional op shops. Stepping into them is like stepping into a magical time long gone when second-hand buying meant “Living la vida loca!” or, as they put it, “Fill a bag for a dollar!”

Then, of course, there was the bucket-list multi-coloured chook race.

My destiny was sealed the moment I spied the sign: “Ben’s Chook Races at the Tambo Hotel”.

Eight different chooks were ready to compete for glory, all of them lovingly dyed with different food colouring and poultry conditioner. With half the prize pot going to the winner, and the other half going to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, my two loves of philanthropy and seizing the day combined to take control of my body, compelling me to bid successfully on not one, but two premium racing chooks: gloriously green Franken-hen, and perfectly (im)proper Pink Bits.

 Ben's Chicken Racing is a must-see while you're in town. Picture: Supplied

“What are you doing?” whispered my husband.

“Carpe diem!” I replied. He is convinced it sounded a lot like “Leave me be!” but I maintain he had artesian water in his ears.

The race began and so did the most hilarious seven and a half minutes of my life.

The sight of eight brightly coloured chickens chasing a chicken-feed-filled remote-control ute was fantastic in itself. But add to that the slapstick sight of said ute continually crashing into the fence, only to be pounced upon and fixed up by an adept 11-year-old boy named Toby... are you imagining this playing out with the Benny Hill soundtrack? You should. Because that's exactly what was playing over the speakers.

 Tambo is also famous for its teddy bears, which are handmade from local wool. Picture: Jack Harlem

Then, as if this meringue-fest couldn't get sweeter, our green monstrosity of goodness Franken-hen came in for the win.

I screeched, I squealed, I received the spoils in cash: \$178!

Between my jumps of excitement, my husband pointed out that I'd bid so high on both hens that my heart-lifting euphoria was actually over a grand profit of \$12.

At that moment I opted for the path that wise married folks have walked since the dawn of time: I simply chose not to hear him.

I squealed, I leaped and I hugged my fellow comedians, thrilled at the disbelief that such magical and unexpected life moments could exist, even in a year like 2020. I genuinely willed up.

And after two weeks of soaking up Queensland's stunning regional sights and artesian waters, I'm pretty sure that my tears, too, smelled like farts.

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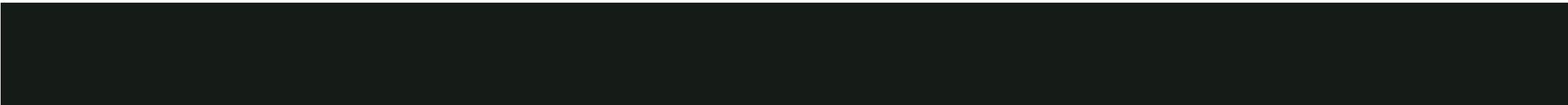
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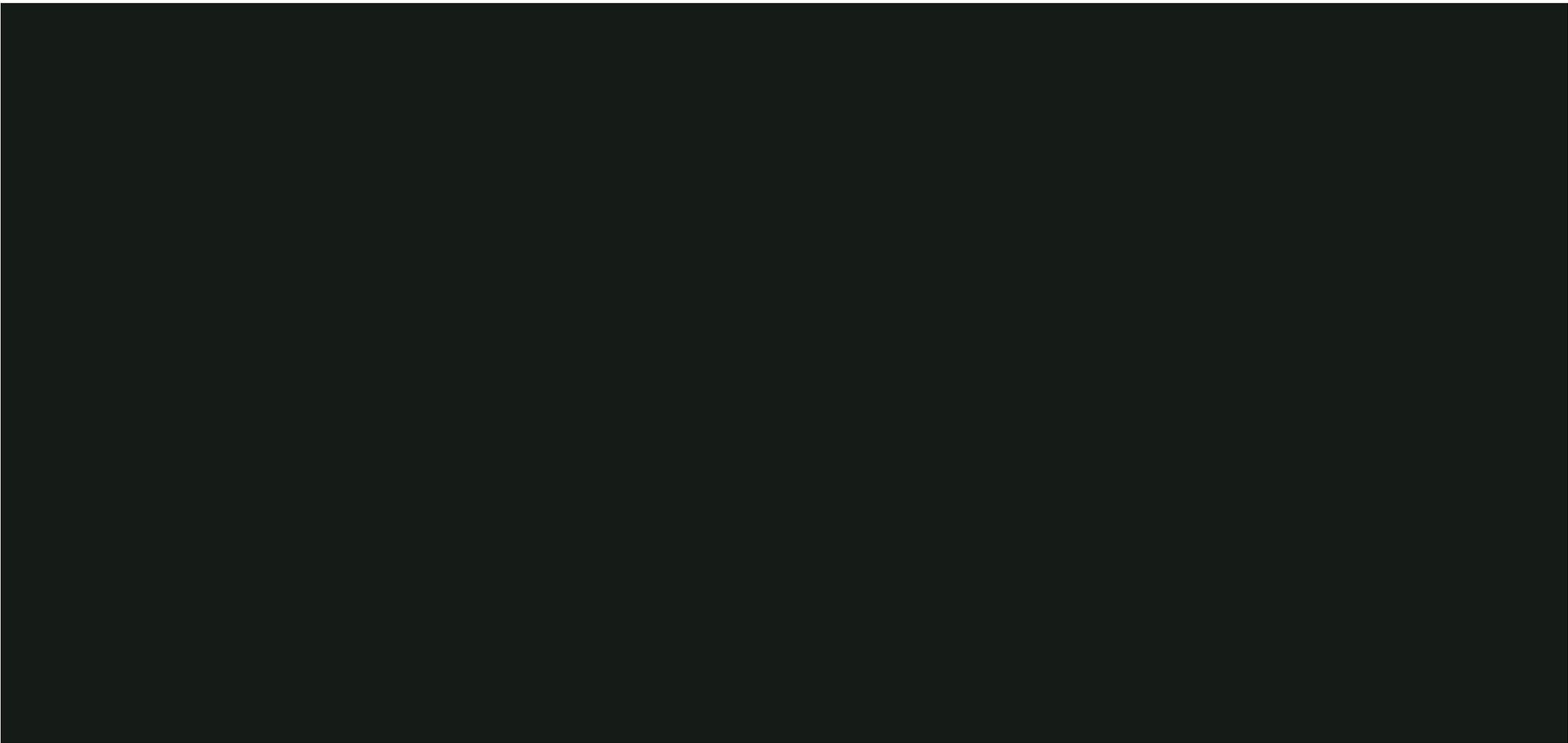
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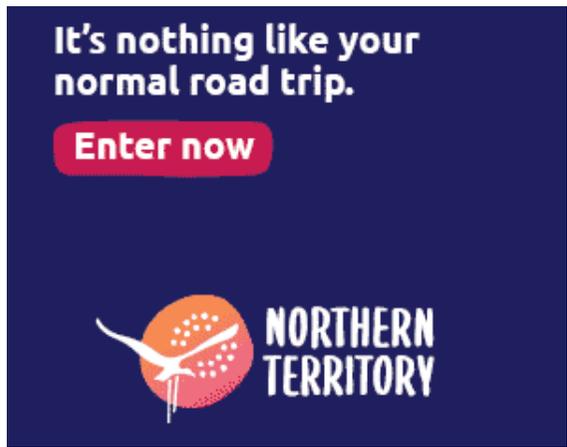


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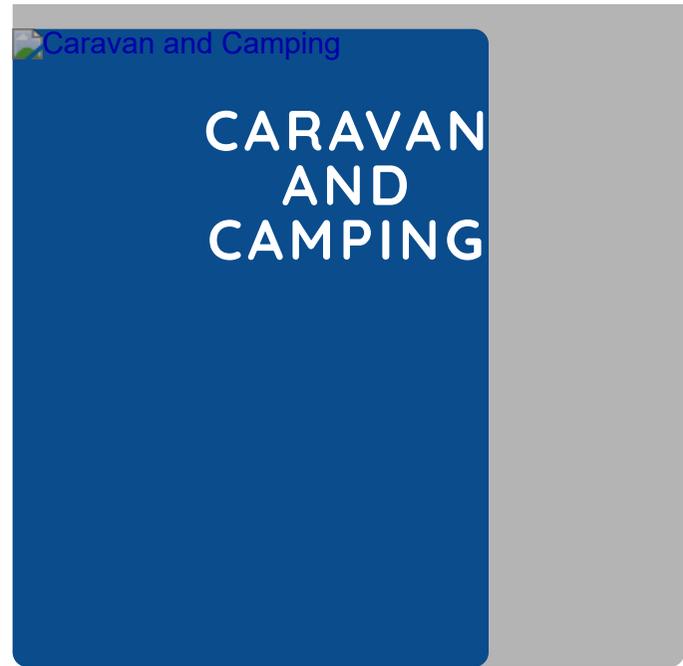
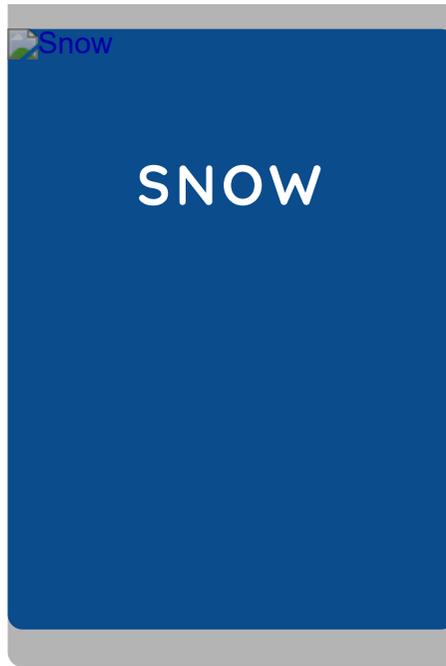
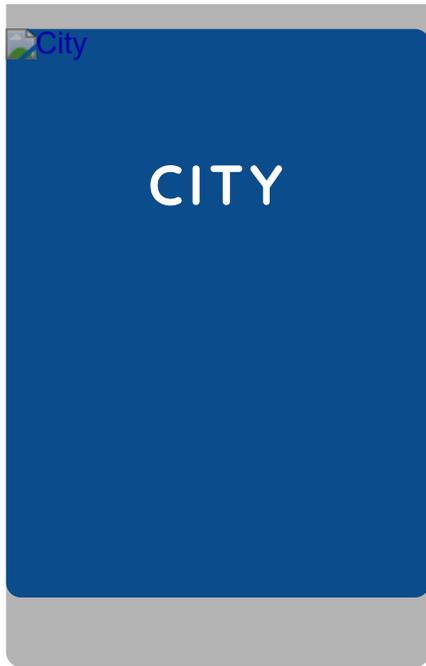
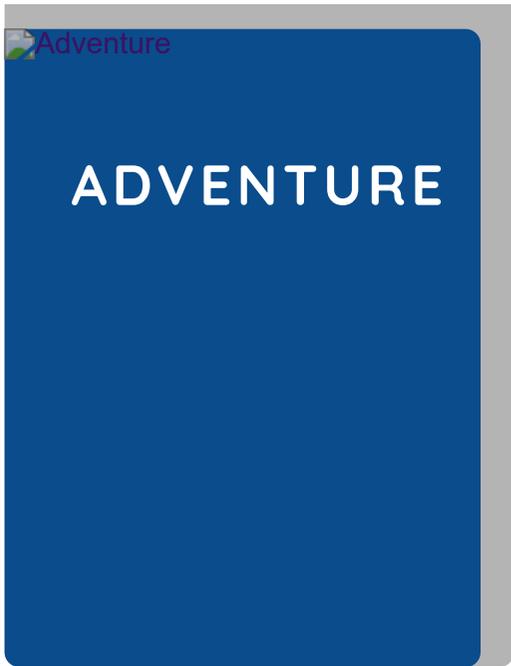
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