



April Wine, Dwayne Gretzky to headline Ribfest

By Brock Weir

The secret's out and Canadian rockers April Wine, classic and retro Dwayne Gretzky will take to the stage this month to headline Aurora's 2023 Ribfest.

Dwayne Gretzky and April Wine were announced as the headliners for the August 25 - 27 event by Mayor Tom Mrakas at last Wednesday's Concerts in the Park event, featuring singer-songwriter Suzie MacNeil.

"Dwayne Gretzky brings to life the greatest songs of all time through their dynamic and theatrical performances," says the Town. "Formed in 2011 in Toronto, Dwayne Gretzky is well-known for performing classic songs with faithful precision. Get ready for a show that curates a nostalgic trip that captures the unique joy of turning a radio dial and being surprised by the familiar.

"April Wine is a Canadian rock band with five platinum or multi-platinum albums in Canada. They've had 21 Top 40 singles, received ten Juno nominations, including seven for Group of the Year, and have been inducted into the Canadian Music Industry Hall of Fame. With hits such as "You Could Have Been a Lady," "Roller," and many others, this band has had much success over five decades within the music industry."

Ribfest will open at Machell Park Friday, August 25, from 4 - 11 p.m. with a beer garden operating from 4 - 10 p.m. and Dwayne Gretzky taking the stage from 9 - 10.30 p.m. The fun continues on Saturday, August 26 from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., with a beer garden from 12 noon to 10 p.m., and April Wine taking over in the evening with a 9 - 10.30 p.m. set.

The final day of Ribfest on Sunday, August 27, will run from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., with a beer garden from 12 noon to 7 p.m.

A special Children's Zone will run from 2 - 5 p.m. on the Saturday and Sunday.

"Mark your calendars and get ready for the tastiest event of the year, promising an unforgettable experience packed with delicious food and incredible live performances," says the Town. "This highly-anticipated event includes a fun-filled inflatable midway, a Children's Zone with free activities for kids, foods for all appetites and a beer garden operated by the Rotary Club of Aurora. While the scrumptious ribs take centre stage, prepare your tastebuds for a variety of mouth-watering treats, including roasted corn-on-the-cob, deep fried pickles, delightful churros, beavertails and more - there's something for everyone!"

April Wine and Dwayne Gretzky are not the only live performances to get the crowds up on their feet.

Popular York Region-based singer Bernadette Connors will take the stage on Friday, August 25, from 5.30 ? 7.30 p.m. On Saturday, August 26, a tribute to Creedence Clearwater Revival will open the day from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., followed by Desire: Ultimate Tribute to U2 from 1.15 p.m. to 2.45 p.m., JETT from 3.30 ? 5 p.m., and Ysi Cattle and The Kowboys from 5.45 ? 7.30 p.m.

Rifest judging will help close out the festival at 11.30 a.m. to determine the tastiest ribs, followed from 12.30 p.m. to 1 p.m. with Aurora Teen Idol Katelyn Schulver; from 1.30 ? 3.30 p.m. with Shania Twin: A Tribute to Shania Twain, from 3.30 ? 5 p.m. with Marshall Dane, and finally Classic Lightfoot: A Tribute to Gordon Lightfoot from 5.30 ? 7.30 p.m.

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