

How the Vegan and Plant-Powered Show is harnessing the new virtual event space - Q&A with Heidi Warricker

 By [Ruth Cooper](#)

10 Nov 2020

This year's Festive Vegan and Plant-Powered Show (FVPPS), set to take place online on Saturday, 28 November 2020, will play host to a wide range of plant-based food and lifestyle brands that will be featured in a virtual expo area.

The show will feature UK vegan chef Gaz Oakley, aka the Avant-Garde Vegan, award-winning Chef Luke Dale Roberts of The Test Kitchen fame, Zimbabwean Nicola Kagoro aka Chef Cola, and Chef Jay Mac from The Kind Kitchen as well as *MasterChef Australia* finalist Simon Toohey.



Simon Toohey to show off the 'coolness' of veggies at Festive Vegan and Plant-Powered Show

26 Oct 2020



We got in touch with event organiser Heidi Warricker to find out how the Vegan and Plant-Powered Show is harnessing the new virtual event space, what attendees can expect and conscious living trends.



Heidi Warricker

What are some of the challenges and opportunities of taking the event online?

Opening the doors for a whole new market that we're only starting to define. While the pandemic keeps impacting our lives, virtual events were the only certainty.

Short time frame to basically learn a whole new set of skills in just a few months. The work required is the same for in-person events, which normally takes up to two years of planning. We have pulled this event together in just months with the help of amazing partners, JAG, Missing Link plus support from our suppliers' social media and design, we are doing this to break ground and learn a new way of doing events.

We are doing this as a precursor to the hybrid events next year (in-person and online); to help keep our exhibitors and sponsor brands visible in this challenging time for small business to inspire audiences and to inform/educate latest products.



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Ruth Cooper 28 Sep 2020



According to the latest stats from international associations/meeting planners, visitors will comprise 46% online and 50% in-person in the future. Why? It's going to take some time for some people to trust going back to in-person events and they will prefer to visit the online event; no geographical boundaries open the doors for more online visitors.

We are all learning new skills we need to work together to break new ground to master online events to get the best ROI to keep industry and brands visible and alive and to inspire and to discover and explore new opportunities. The challenge for us has been to train and educate our clients in a short period of time - on why online and how to prepare for an online event, the technology and the new platform. Many are still thinking we are going back to the way it was with in-person, which is not the case. Yes, ideally, we want to meet in-person, multi-sensory experience etc. but this has gone. New events are hybrid going forward and companies need to get used to the online platforms to better understand how to get the ROI and discover the opportunities the online platform presents.

A highlight of the attendee experience was to view culinary demonstrations from chefs around the world bringing their

kitchens to the screen, along with some live dialogue and Q&A with the chefs on stage. The best virtual events find ways to smartly mirror the in-person experience by providing engaging and uniquely interactive content and networking opportunities. Engagement and interactive content like networking, polls, booths and live Q&As that help attendees feel more connected to the content.

📺 **What would be your top show highlights?**

It is the talent that we have drawn to the show – a wonderful range of some of the best local and international chefs and food personalities. These include *MasterChef Australia* 2019 top-three contestant Simon Toohey; one of the world's most celebrated vegan chefs Gaz Oakley, aka *The Avant-Garde Vegan*; Zimbabwean Nicola Kagoro, aka Chef Cola; Chef Aphelele (Apples) Dlungana; the inimitable Luke Dale-Roberts; Jenny Morris; and Chef Chris Erasmus from Foliage in Franschhoek. The FVPPS will also play host to a wide range of plant-based food and lifestyle brands, which will be featured in a virtual expo area and visitors to the show will be able to interact with exhibitors and make purchases. We also have a range of experts at our not-to-be-missed Plant Power Talks as well as The Great Great Big Festive Vegan Banquet.

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Be part of a unique interactive experience, cooking along with MasterChef Australia's @simon.toohey, using ingredients delivered to your door by @ucooksa. Simon will be showing us how to make his delicious Baked Rice, Aubergine and Leek Hotpot - the perfect vegan dish for your festive table this Christmas. For only R495 you'll get: A UCOOK Plant Based Market Box delivered to your door* (ingredients for two pax) General admission to The Festive Vegan & Plant Powered Show Access to the Premium Vegan & Meet Session area where you can meet Simon online, ask questions and go on camera with Simon for a souvenir photograph! Book now: link in bio (*applies to Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria & Durban only) . . #veganchristmas #festivefood #plantbased #christmas #veganrecipes #plantpowerza #veganlifestyle #vegansouthafrica #vegan #plantpower #plantpowered #southafrica #capetown

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A post shared by @plantpowerza on Nov 5, 2020 at 11:44pm PST



What would you say are the next vegan and plant-based trends?

There will be a focus on health and sustainability – people want to know where their food produce is sourced.

Consumers everywhere are, to some degree, interested in replacements for animal products so there is a huge growth in the supply of plant-based and alternative meat protein - plant-based meat, seafood, dairy and egg alternatives or lab-grown meat or seafood. Healthier, more sustainable alternatives that still cook, look, taste like the real thing. It seems there is no end to innovation in the plant-based sector, and the range of vegan products expands every year – from watermelon ‘tuna’ to smoked carrot ‘salmon’.

Along with improving overall health, consumers increasingly are concerned about the health of the environment. From packaging to production to distribution, products will need to pivot to reduce food waste and work toward decarbonisation efforts.

■ **What are some of your favourite vegan and plant-based products?**

Chickpea snacks, date syrup and plant-based oat milk.

■ **What advice would you give someone who is contemplating going plant-based or generally reducing their meat intake and living a more conscious life?**

Everyone is on their own journey, don't feel pressured to do what everyone else is telling you what to do.

Start off slow. Cut down meat. Start with one of your favourite dishes, say a chicken stir fry and replace the chicken with beans, lentils or tofu as your plant-based protein source. Take some time to get comfortable with cooking and eating a few simple plant-based meals before you start overhauling your entire diet. If you're newly transitioning to a plant-based diet, you might start by adding just one or two plant-based meals per week and gradually work your way down. Or you could make a goal to only eat meat X times per week, depending on what feels realistic for you. You can also focus on upping your fruit and vegetable intake before making any other major changes. Keep your meals fun and exciting.



Chef Gaz Oakley to showcase plant-based cooking at Festive Vegan and Plant Powered Show

5 Oct 2020



■ **What would be the overarching message of the event?**

More conscious, sustainable living. Plant-based inspiration, discovery, explore, meet and engage with the top chef experts and experts plus a wide range of plant-based brands.

■ **How do you live a more conscious life?**

I started really thinking about what I eat and buy and the impact I have on the environment. I also decided to make sure I was informed about my food choices. I decided to live within my own truth and to live with courage.

■ **What would you say are the unique local challenges and opportunities when it comes to promoting a more conscious/sustainable way of living in South Africa?**

There is the perception that going vegan is both difficult and more expensive. We also live in a country where people don't know where their next meal is coming from.

Tickets for the Festive Vegan and Plant-Powered Show are available from [Quicket](#).

veganandplantpoweredshow.com

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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