

# Practical and popular

**Y**OU can always count on the horses, cattle, dogs and cats to get a good turnout at the Castle Hill Show but the alpacas are proving that they aren't just another face in the crowd.

The gorgeous animals have quickly become a popular attraction at the show and no one knows this better than Sue Maynard from Gunnamatta Stud in Galston.

Ms Maynard will show three alpacas at Castle Hill from her Galston and Mudgee studs.

She first fell in love with the animals in 1993 and seven years ago moved to Galston to take on more animals and hasn't looked back.

"They're very likeable," she said. "They have lots of personality and they're very interested in everything that's going on, very curious. They want to know exactly what something is."

Alpacas don't generally like dogs but have a similar role to them on a working farm.

"They are used in the country to protect sheep because they'll pack together and chase predators away," Ms Maynard said. "They can actually stomp on a fox and kill it. They really have a very protective nature. They bond with the sheep and I've



**Sue Maynard with her alpacas which will feature in the show. Inset, one of the gorgeous creatures.**

Pictures: BRAD HUNTER

seen them stay with lambs to protect them."

Their other practical use is the supply of fleece. Ms Maynard sells her fleece to a company in Victoria which is often exported.

"It is a growing industry," she said. "They can produce carpet, clothes, shawls. It's usually blended with silk or merino and has that really silky handle and has less

lanolin than merino so it feels very soft."

Despite their working uses, most people just love the alpaca for its long eyelashes, curly hair over its eyes and kind nature.

"People always bring their kids over to us at the show because they want to get up close," Ms Maynard said. "They always ask lots of questions and take lots of photos."

If you would like to know more about these animals, Alpaca Week will be celebrated from May 2 to May 10 with open days at various studs.

Ms Maynard is secretary of the Hawkesbury-Blue Mountains region of the Australian Alpaca Association who will organise the events. To find out more visit their website at [www.hbm alpaca.com.au](http://www.hbm alpaca.com.au)

## PROGRAM OF EVENTS

### Friday, March 20:

From 9am: Judging in various pavilions, mobile laser skirmish, showjumping, crocodile encounters and reptiles, animal nursery, historical display, blacksmith, cooper, saddle maker, stonemason, art show, craft and horticulture exhibits, educational display by school students, black and coloured sheep and shearing, chainsaw demonstrations.

1pm: Gates open to holders of a Senior Card.

1.30pm: Horse events.

6pm: Entertainment including Kids in the Biz, the Whiperoos.

6.30pm: Dog obedience – dog rings.

7pm: Tania's Strictly Dancing.

7.30pm: Baulkham Hills Junior Motor Cycle demonstration.

8pm: Utopean fire dance performance and fire eating.

### Saturday, March 21:

From 9am: All breed dog championship, horse events, showjumping, cattle judging, crocodile encounters and reptiles, animal nursery, historical display, blacksmith, cooper, saddle maker, stonemason, at show, craft and horticulture exhibits, educational display, black and coloured sheep and shearing; chainsaw demonstrations.

10am: Rats and mice, sheep judging, goat judging, woodchop events.

11am: Ute muster – more than 50 vehicles on display.

1.15pm: Opening ceremony main arena with grand parade.

5.30pm: The Whiperoos.

6pm: Dog Agility Display by Agility Dog Club of NSW.

6.30pm: Elevation School of Performing Arts.

6.45pm: Kidz in the Biz.

7pm: Extreme Fmx Air freestyle motor cross.

7.30pm: Dwayne Elix and the Engineers.

8pm: Utopian Fire dance and fire eating.

8.30pm: Extreme Fmx Air freestyle motor cross

9pm: Fireworks display.

### Sunday, March 22:

9am: Cat show, mobile laser skirmish, horse events, showjumping, chainsaw demonstrations, Crocodile Encounters and Reptiles, flyball competition dog arena, animal nursery, historical display, blacksmith, saddle maker, stonemason, black and coloured sheep, art show, craft and horticulture, educational display.

10.30am: Alpaca judging.

Noon: Fleece to Garment Competition.

4pm: Show concludes.