

A Rockaway Original

Annual Rockstock and Barrels to showcase authentic and inspiring acts



Rockstock's not just music, it's crafts and surfing too! Photo by Vanessa Vasquez



One of the truly great moments of Rockstocks past, Walker and the Brotherhood of the Grape, singing with his cousin Jimmy Dowd. Photo by Vanessa Vasquez.



Local favorites Rattrap Bumpkin will be a big part of the fun and festivities.



Ecstatic Madmen rocked out despite a cold, chilly 2018 Rocksock, They'll be back this year!

By Ralph Mancini

Chances are the person who coined the phrase “the best things in life are free,” may have just finished taking in the sounds and pageantry of Rockstock and Barrels.

This year's surf/skate/music festival spectacular—the 13th in its history—promises to feature an intriguing collection of artists as part of a day-long boardwalk celebration on June 15.

“We provide an opportunity for original bands to perform original music. We are open to all genres and the only prerequisite is that the band performs its own material,” explained Walker Hornung, one of the founding fathers of the yearly festival.

In 2003, Walker, Jimmy Dowd of St James Clothing, and Steve Stathis of Boarders Surf Shop lobbied the NYC Parks Department for a local skate park, and a designated surf beach in 2003, so the only thing left to do was bring the music and the people down to Rockaway Beach to celebrate.

So, in 2006 the first Rockstock was created.

“The [Rockstock and Barrels] baby has grown into a teenager,” laughed Dowd. “That’s what someone said to me recently, and I thought about and yeah, that’s kind of rad.”

Dowd, Stathis, and Hornung have

always made sure the event as free for everyone, no matter how much it has grown over the years.

“We believe people should come out to support Rockstock 13 for all the reasons of the prior years: great music, the surf competition and it’s free. Free is rare. In order for those involved to continue presenting the neighborhood with free music, we need the support of vendors and locals by attending.”

The 2019 edition includes a number of familiar faces, such as Rattrap Bumpkin, Indaculture and the Ecstatic Madmen, as well as a trio of newcomers led by jazz songstress Sasha Dobson, violinist Morgan Weidinger and French pop-rock/folk-rock sensation LiLi Roquelin.

During a recent interview with The Wave, Hornung couldn't contain his enthusiasm when speaking about Weidinger, assuring that the young St. Louis native is “the best thing I’ve seen in two or three years,” and predicted that she’ll someday be a household name.

The long-time rocker-producer also singled out The Skells, when referencing some of the local acts on the bill by calling the surf-punk combo “an uncompromising original band that likes to push the boundaries.”

Horning himself will also be performing with Brotherhood of the



French phenom LiLi Roquelin will be part of the festivities. Photo by Michelle Kawka

Grape with special guest BMWA, as he and his crew will set Rockaway Beach ablaze with their sizzling brand of soca and dancehall offerings.

But music, while a huge element of the event, serves as the theme music for the surf and skate contests that will be going on. There’s also an added attraction this year, more stuff for kids.

“We really want to give the younger kids that come out more stuff to enjoy,” said Dowd, who said that in addition to Jerry Rea bringing his famous fire truck, Casey Butler will

be hosting an arts and crafts tent, which will provide face painting and more.

If the weather permits, the magic of Adam Cardone will be on display to delight the crowd.

The boardwalk extravaganza kicks off at 10 a.m. and will continue into the evening hours, along with a highly-anticipated afterparty. The aforementioned Skells will be playing the afterparty at the Rockaway Beach Gold Club (219 Beach 100th St) starting at 7 p.m.

So, pack those water coolers and get ready to dance into the night.