The Milton Fair Grounds will be a tasty destination this weekend as the annual Milton Ribfest gets underway. The event runs July 15-17 and features six ribbers. ***Champion file photo***

New ownership for Milton Ribfest

Event set for this weekend

New ownership, but the same savoury summer showcase.

That's what Justin Brown promises for this coming weekend's seventh annual Milton Ribfest.

Set to run Friday to Sunday (July 15 to 17) at the fairgrounds, the event was recently taken over by Northern Heat Rib Series from local founder/operator Scott Anders.

However, the change in ownership won't translate into a major change in what rib lovers can expect.

"Our goal wasn't to come in and cancel everything out, but to make sure it continues," ensured Brown, a founder and co-owner of the series that originated two years ago in his hometown of St. Thomas and now includes 16 ribfests throughout southern Ontario — including stops in Ajax, Orillia and Welland. "It's a great event and it's one we were happy and willing to invest in."

The Milton Ribfest has been moved up from its previous August weekend to fit into the overall series schedule. Its Friday evening kickoff will coincide with Downtown Milton's Cruisin' on a Hot Summer Night classic car show on Main Street.

The new date represents the only significant change for the local event, besides — noted Brown — a revamped layout for the fairgrounds.

"We're just finessing it (layout) to create a better flow," said Brown, who put on a musical festival in London before branching out into the ribfest business. "It's about figuring out how you can best do an event in the space you have."

Live bands will entertain visitors throughout the weekend, which will include a kids' zone, beer tent, artisans' fair and vendors.

"And with free entry and parking, it's very inclusive. People can come in for free and just listen to the music if they want," said Brown, who has been able to maintain a number of sponsors and volunteers for this summer's event.

Among the six ribbers on hand will be longtime returnees Kentucky Smokehouse, Boss Hog's and Texas Rangers.

Hours of operation for the ribfest are Friday from 4 to 11 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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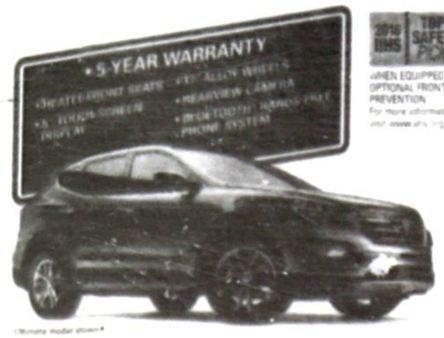

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