

# Sam Hunt times three for Outspoken

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WANAKA SUN

Sam Hunt sometimes tells a story when introducing his poem 'Old Flames'. It involves Tarras. Some years ago he stopped in the township, he tells the audience, to pick up the "last mango in Tarras" (not true, he admits, it was a pound of butter). He got to talking to a woman in the local shop, "the wonderful lady at the Tarras store in the white pinny. She had clear blue eyes, the same blue as the Otago sky that morning." The conversation turned to life, to its difficulties, to its sadness, and she offered a piece of wisdom. "She looked at me, and she said I'll tell you something: Some fires you can't put out," he explained. The poem ends with the lines "some fires / you can't put out."

"She gave me that poem," he said.

This connection to, and expression of, the profound in the everyday is one of the things that has made Sam Hunt one



PHOTO: LAURA WILLIAMSON

of New Zealand's best-known, and best-loved, poets.

Wanaka audiences will have the chance to experience his work first-hand when he performs three shows in the Wanaka area this January as part of the Outspoken Festival of Words & Storytelling. He'll take the stage in Wanaka

on January 12 and 13, with a third performance to take place at the Carrick winery in Bannockburn on January 14.

Sam last appeared in Wanaka for a sold out show in the Luggate Hall in 2011, and he said he was looking forward to returning. "I have the happiest memories of

Luggate and I'm looking forward to being back down there. It's country I've always enjoyed."

Liz Breslin, artist liaison for the festival, said she was thrilled to have Sam opening the series. "Sam epitomises the tradition of the bards-telling the stories, telling them true. His honesty has touched so many people. Most locals I've spoken to have some great Sam memories from their school days or his tours with Gary McCormick in the eighties," she said.

Sam was awarded a QSM in 1986 and in 2010 was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) for services to poetry. Last year he received a Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement.

He performed recently in Auckland with another Outspoken act, rapper and spoken word performer Tourettes, who will be appearing at the festival in February with 2012 New Zealand National Poetry Slam Champion Ali Jacs.

