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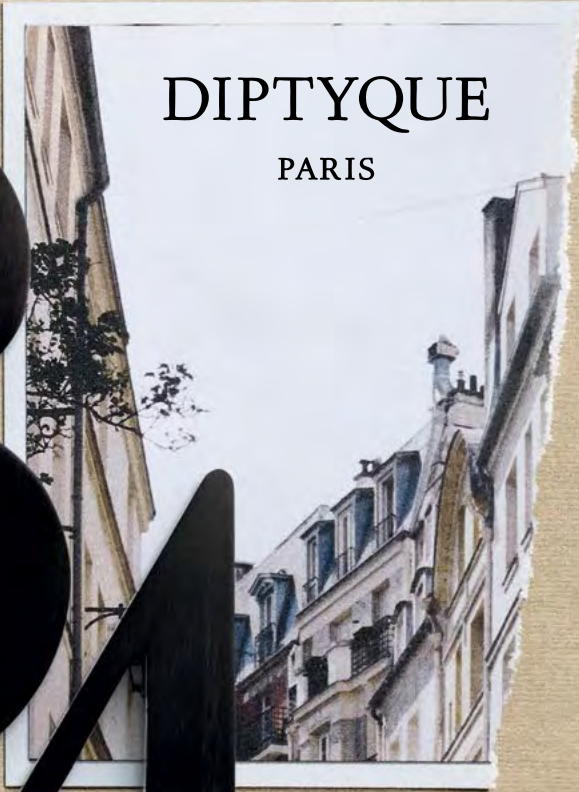
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Ann Parenti
PUBLISHER

From the Publisher

As we celebrated our fourth anniversary of Chic Compass this past summer, we pulled out all stops this autumn to bring you the Celebration of the Arts Autumn edition! It is packed with spectacular tales of talented musicians like the UNLV graduate Paul Taylor who has made a name for himself in the jazz world. It includes fashion shoots from swimwear in Miami to Los Angeles and a fashion show as far as Japan with the help of our friend Mark Gunter, and his "have camera – will travel" attitude. We showcase the fabulous artists Gig Depio, Niki Sands, and Pamela Nielsen and share a story of a surprisingly beautiful new gem in Las Vegas called the Rita Deanin Abbey Museum, honoring artist Rita Deanin Abbey.

As if that isn't enough, we have two beautiful souls that share their insights and knowledge of their acting careers. The stunning Donna Mills graces our cover and gives us a glimpse of what it takes to make it in Hollywood and still be true to yourself. Kelley Poling has a unique and magnificent history that gives us a new view of what it takes to be an actress after years of being a stuntwoman.

We don't want to leave you without sharing a fun Italian spot in Las Vegas called Siena Italian Authentic Trattoria & Deli, known for its restaurant and bar that features live entertainment but is also a sought-after Italian Deli and Marketplace. We even take you on a little tour of a new Med Spa in town that offers healing to their clients. Then we share the story of the multi-talented Mario Barth, who is not only a great musician but a sought-after tattoo artist to the stars.

I take you home with me to my "other home in my heart," Maui. Every island has its own personality and mystique, but Maui is the one I call home. I hope you can find the time to visit the islands one day soon and find out for yourself why so many people return again and again to the islands.

We also give you the inside track of one of Las Vegas' top Interior Designers, Christopher Todd, he has so many talents it was hard to contain them into one story. Then, the lovely Claire Nagel, who is an international award winning Realtor here in Las Vegas that has quite the history of how she arrived in Las Vegas and why she now calls this home.

Finally, Joe Amato gives you a firsthand study of what it takes to keep a company alive and well during the transition of ownership over the years. It's a story about Cashman Photo, established in 1967, and how with creative and dedicated ownership, an organization's life survives in an ever-changing world.

Speaking of changes, Chic Compass will be announcing something very exciting by the end of the year. It will take the magazine to its next incarnation, and we can't wait to share more details with you. But for now, you will just have to wait!

May you have a joyous autumn season ahead and sit back and enjoy the celebration of the arts!

Ann Parenti



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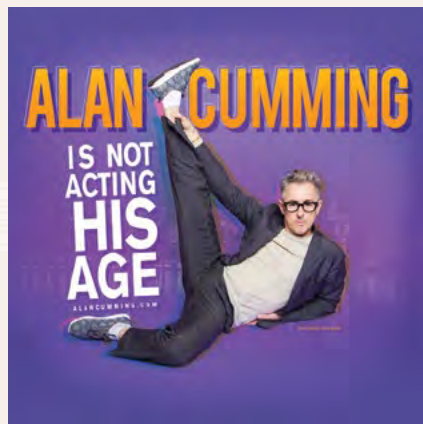


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Joan S. Peck
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

From the Editor

This issue of Chic Compass magazine is all about celebrating the ARTS in many forms. Once again, our multi-talented writers have done a splendid job bringing stories that showcase talented artists who bring beauty and pleasure to us in different forms. Each artist is gifted in their creativity, and you will marvel at reading each one's story.

We share the stories of talented artists Gig Diplo, who creates enormous, detailed murals; Niki Sands with her figurative style is equal parts surrealism and Cubism and a hint of the abstract; Mario Barth with his ink artistry in tattoos, Pamela Nielsen with her vivid passion and color), and Rita Deanin Abbey, the former UNLV Emeritus of Art in 1987. The newly opened Rita Deanin Abbey Museum honors Rita and is a glorious monument to her endless talent and an astonishing array of mediums. You will be amazed that anything this outstanding is right here in our valley.

On a different note, it's always fun to read about a local artist making it big time. You will read more about the fabulous Jazz artist Paul Taylor and his latest CD album, And Now This, which has succeeded with more number 1 hits.

Christopher Todd shows us how his innate ability to mix and match designs and materials makes him one of the most sought-after local designers and decorators with clients across the country. Read to discover that his talent doesn't stop there.

Kelley Poling's story takes you from her being a stuntwoman to becoming an actress. She has accomplished so much more, and you will be amazed as you read her article.

We are delighted to feature Donna Mills on our cover, a testament to the belief that beautiful women at a certain age only become more attractive. Donna is always delighted to encourage women to keep doing more than sitting as they age. You'll read about some of her views on the importance of confidence and how she keeps the spark in how she lives today. She is one busy lady.

ON THE COVER

MODEL:
Donna Mills

PHOTOGRAPHY BY:
James Franklin

FASHION:
Dress by Mark Zunino
Gold Kidskin Shoes by Dolce & Gabana

JEWELRY:
Nolan Miller Glamour Collection

STYLIST:
Rene' Horsch

On the health side, there is a heart-warming and inspiring article, Beauty Meets Bravery, highlighting the newest health-conscious spa offering organic products, run by Las Vegas cancer survivor Susan Salas. A story that will grip your heart.

As always, we are honored to show you some of what's happening in the fashion world. Mark Gunter shares with us his first-time-ever photoshoot of a new fashion show held in Tokyo, Japan, and his photos from the Coast-to-Coast Swim Week fashion shows in Los Angeles and Miami. The designs show us how gorgeous and unique swimwear can be.

Claire Nagel's story shows why she is an award-winning Realtor with Las Vegas Sotheby's International Realty. Her love of selling luxury real estate has brought her worldwide recognition, from her beginnings in Europe to landing in Las Vegas.

Joe Amato demonstrates the importance of a business always looking forward and preparing and planning for unexpected happenings to protect your business.

On the lighter side, we celebrate our ability to travel, dine out, and be entertained. If you want to know more about Maui, reading Ann Parenti's delightful story about her "home away from home" will urge you to make your reservations and go!

And once again, we bring you news about some of the most delightful dining places. The Siena Italian Authentic Trattoria and Deli in Summerlin will have you drooling and loosening your belt just by seeing what they offer!

This autumn issue of Chic Compass is gorgeous, and I can't wait for you to see what's inside this edition of the magazine. As you read each piece, I hope that you enjoy it as much as we did to create it for you.

Happy Fall in Las Vegas!

Jean S. Peck





“True Greatness Seeks No Audience” oil on canvas 48X60

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PAUL TAYLOR AND NOW THIS

By Sheryl Aronson



Photo of Paul Taylor by Sheryl Aronson

Since the mid-'90s, saxophonist Paul Taylor has been firing up stages with his passionate and energetic performances. His first album, *On the Horn*, debuted in 1995, and he has released twelve albums throughout his 25-year-plus career. Constantly stretching his creative horizons, Taylor's eclectic styling of music reaches across the genres of urban jazz, smooth jazz, funk, and electronic / pop.

With his newest album, *And Now This*, created via the exchange of digital files during the Pandemic, Paul Taylor and his collaborator, producer, and co-writer, Dino Esposito, have once again hit the charts with #1 songs.

A graduate of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas - Division of Jazz and Commercial Music, Taylor decided to make Las Vegas his home after graduation. He has toured extensively with top artists such as Keiko Matsui, The Rippingtons, Peter White and Euge Groove, Michael Lington, Marion Meadows, Warren Hill, and many more. He also tours as a solo act.

At Left: Paul Taylor

While in Las Vegas, I sat with Paul Taylor, a recording artist and one of contemporary jazz's top performers as a sax player, and asked him about his new album, released in November 2021.

Sheryl Aronson: What's the album's title?

Paul Taylor: My 12th CD is called *And Now This*. I made the album remotely during the pandemic with my producer Dino Esposito.

Sheryl Aronson: You have quite a history with him—he's been your producer and collaborator for almost your entire recording career.

Paul Taylor: I met Dino when I was just out of college. Dino was a successful pop artist in the late 80s and had a top-five single called "I Like It." We met through a mutual friend, and he came to see my band play a few times. We clicked and kept in touch over the years. I knew I would have him produce / co-write my albums when I made it on the contemporary jazz scene. In the late 90s, we began collaborating, and Dino has been working with me since then.

Sheryl Aronson: What is the meaning behind the title of your new album, *And Now This*?

Paul Taylor: There are a few meanings: it's been a big break since my last album came out in 2016, and I wanted a strong title; instead of calling it one of the title tracks' names, I wanted something that sounded ambiguous and esoteric. I've been moving forward in my personal and creative life, and as



we're coming out of this pandemic, I feel I'm kicking it into high gear! Then I had an epiphany in Macy's one day. My girlfriend and I were shopping back in November, and we saw a clothesline called *And Now This*, and it hit me... that's what I'm naming my album!

Sheryl Aronson: I love the title, and you look great on the album cover. Your album is doing well, and some of your songs are charting on Billboard.

Paul Taylor: The album was released on November 5th, 2021. My first radio single, "Straight to the Point," reached #1 Most added on Billboard's Radio Chart. I was also excited to do a re-imagining of "Ride It," which was a big hit

done by DJ Regard (2019 hit remix of Jay Sean's 2008 #1 UK R&B hit). I enlisted Grammy-winning artist Jamie Jones to sing on "Ride It." The second single, "Friday @ 5," has done well and hit #1 on Billboard.

Sheryl Aronson: You've been in the music industry for 20-plus years. How did you begin playing the sax?

Paul Taylor: I grew up in Colorado, and when I was seven years old, my father asked both my brother and me if we wanted to play an instrument. We both said yes. I played throughout junior high and high school and participated in stage band, and took private lessons.

Sheryl Aronson: Who were some of your musical influences?

Paul Taylor: Grover Washington, Jr., David Sanborn, Earth Wind & Fire, Brecker Brothers, Patrice Rushen, and Ramsey Lewis. I formed a band in high school, and we played funk, jazz, and Top 40 music. We played house parties and backyard parties and then worked

our way up to nightclubs. I knew I wanted to be a professional musician and pursued that goal. When it was time to go to college, I applied to Berklee College of Music, Eastman, Julliard, and UNLV.

Sheryl Aronson: You chose UNLV and are a graduate of their Division of Jazz and Commercial Music.

Paul Taylor: I received a full-ride scholarship. UNLV has a great music program, and I played in their jazz band. I went there from '78 to '82. Our Jazz band went to Poland, South America, and Spain every other year and went on major trips overseas.

Sheryl Aronson: Your background in performance and music theory has certainly contributed to a successful career. How did you transition from student to professional musician in Las Vegas?

Paul Taylor: I played in lounges and clubs around town for about 15 years. There were lean periods and some good periods, but I always worked on my music. I just never gave up. My big break came when I played on one of Dino Esposito's sessions at Jeff Lorber's home studio. A few years later, in 1994, Jeff remembered me and asked me to play with him at the Catalina Island Jazz Festival. Keiko Matsui and her producer/husband Kazu liked my performance and offered me an audition with their band. I was hired and toured with the Matsui's for two years (appearing on *Sapphire* and *Dream Walk*). Kazu Matsui eventually produced my debut album, *On the Horn*, which gave me the #1 radio hit "Till We Meet Again."

My exposure to Keiko's band launched my career in the smooth jazz genre. I played with the Rippingtons for a short while from 1999 to 2000. In 2001, I signed with Peak Records, debuting my album *Hypnotic*, and in 2004, "Steppin' Out," the title track from my 2003 Top Ten Billboard Con-



temporary Jazz album, became Radio & Records' third biggest genre airplay cut of the year.

Sheryl Aronson: Let's move forward and talk about what you've been doing recently. You've toured with Sax to the Max and also toured solo. How did Sax to Max get together?

Paul Taylor: Michael Lington, Vincent Ingala, and I formed a supergroup of sax players and packaged ourselves for playing at festivals and concert venues. We created a cool intro and finale that energized the audience. Each of us took turns performing our songs and backing each other up. Our first performance was Seabreeze Jazz Festival in Florida.

Sheryl Aronson: Tell me what types of saxophones you play.

Paul Taylor: I play soprano, alto, and tenor when recording, but my main two are soprano and alto.

Sheryl Aronson: Paul, what does playing music mean to you?

Paul Taylor: It's the best feeling in the world for me to perform. When I'm playing my music on stage for people who have taken time out of their schedules to see me, I want to give them everything. I'm operating on all cylinders, everything is clicking, and I have another chance to win them over. I want my audience to feel happy and feel my energy and spirit.



Photo of Paul Taylor performing by Sheryl Aronson

Photo of Paul Taylor by Sheryl Aronson





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DESIGNER: TOMMY LE
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



FASHION IN JAPAN

A SPECTACULAR EVENING

Article by Joan S. Peck
Photography by Mark Gunter

Virgelia Productions, Inc. launched its premier project in Tokyo, Japan, on August 21, and Mark Gunter was there with his camera for the photo shoot.

The successful black-tie dinner and fashion show at the Hilton Hotel Tokyo was where approximately 400 of Tokyo's socialites gathered to witness the latest couture collections of Los Angeles-based fashion designers Will Franco and Tommy Le.

Emceed by the legendary Tokyo-based Greg Irwin, models were serenaded by ballads and romantic violins as they walked the red carpet and showed off their exquisite gowns amid murmurs of delight.



DESIGNER: TOMMY LE
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: TOMMY LE
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: TOMMY LE
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: WILL FRANCO
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



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Donna wears a Crème Ostrich Feather Coat by designer Mark Zunino and jewelry from the Nolan Miller Glamour Collection.

THE AGELESS DONNA MILLS

Article and Photography by James Franklin
Styling by Rene' Horsch
Fashion by Mark Zunino, and Carolina Herrera
Jewelry from the Nolan Miller Glamour Collection

You may know Donna Mills best for portraying the scheming and manipulative Abby on the Primetime drama series "Knots Landing." Recently, Donna was cast for a part in Jordan Peele's film, *Nope*, which most certainly will put her back on Hollywood's radar. At age 81, she wants Hollywood to know she's ready to jump back into the industry and has no plans to stop her passion for acting any time soon.

I sat with Donna and asked her questions about herself and what makes her a successful woman today.

STYLE

JF: In your opinion, what makes a woman strong, independent, and elegant?

DM: "Wow, all of those things. I think what makes a woman strong is confidence—having confidence in herself and her own abilities, style, and looks. Strength comes from having the confidence to be sure you know what you are doing. I believe that makes anyone confident, but a woman particularly."

"I believe what makes me independent is that I make my own money ... always have. Never have I been with a man who pays all the bills. I've tried to teach my daughter that too—to be independent and always feel safe, you have to have your own money."



Donna wears a Blush Baby Sequined Dress by designer Mark Zunino and jewelry from the Nolan Miller Glamour Collection.

"Elegance comes from confidence. A woman will often dress a certain way, and if she's unsure about her confidence, it will show. But if she walks out feeling it, she will be elegant."

JF: What are some of your favorite things to do to relax and feel comfortable?

DM: "Playing tennis. Most people probably wouldn't feel that's relaxing, but something about being active takes you away mentally. On the tennis court, I can't think about anything except the game. It takes me out of any problems I might have, so it is very relaxing. I'm a doer, and I can't sit and read a book for hours and hours. I'm too antsy ... I have to be moving. I think it comes from being a dancer, which is how I started. I'm happiest when I'm doing stuff, not just lounging."

JF: What is your secret to having a balanced life in a career that can, at times, be chaotic?

DM: "I don't know if I have a secret. It's always been that way, and, at times, it is chaotic. Just when you think you're doing one thing, something else comes along, and then you have to go off on location for two months. So life is always topsy turvy. You have to learn to go with the punches and not look at them as punches but as opportunities."

JF: Besides talent, your name is synonymous with fashion and style. What are some of your favorite tips everyone can pull from to be more stylish?

DM: "I think probably one of the biggest things is having a good classic wardrobe. Classic pants, blazers, dresses. If you always have these, you can add your personal touches, feel confident in your skin, and be ready for almost everything."

FAMILY

JF: Being a celebrity and single parent must have challenges. What are some of the high and low points with your teen/adult daughter?

DM: "She's a really good kid, so the high points have been many. There was the regular teenage stuff, but she was a straight-A student, did modeling gigs, and has always been very responsible. She's always made me very proud of her."

JF: Your daughter is now in her 20s. How has your relationship changed now that she is an adult?

DM: "We are better friends now. There is less that I have to impose on her as a mom and parent. She was over last night, and we

watched a movie together. We talk about everything, and it's really nice to have that bond of friendship as well as our mother/daughter relationship."

JF: How much did she lean on you for help with her career?

DM: "She was very clear not to take any help from me. I wanted to give it, but she wanted to do everything on her own. Because she was a child of a celebrity, she didn't want people to see things being handed to her, so she got what she wanted because of herself."

JF: You have a vineyard. How did that come about?

DM: "The vineyard came about by my partner Larry Gilman, who went up there to cut back the weeds and vines because they were killing the trees. While he was up there, he went crazy! I thought if you took all the brush down, it would make the soil erode and slide into the yard. I was not for it initially, but he got a geologist who said the earth was good. Larry talked to vintners, eventually put in the steps, and cleared the area because it was nothing but dead trees and brush. He planted in 2014, and we got a crop the following year. In 2016 our first vintage won a silver medal at the San Francisco International Wine Competition,

"You have to learn to go with the punches and not look at them as punches but as opportunities."

which totally surprised us. Since then, we've won one more silver and a bronze."

CAREER

JF: You have done daytime TV and nighttime TV and film. What are the differences, and how was it to transition from one platform to another?

DM: "Film and Television are shot the same way and would be preferred by most actors. I did a soap opera years ago called *Love Is a Many Splendored Thing*, and recently, I did *General Hospital*. The difference in how they are done now is so different. We used to come in the day before, rehearse the script, and work with the director. You'd come in the next day, go on the stage with cameras, and rehearse more than you'd shoot. It was like a real acting experience. It was hard because you were learning a lot of dialogue daily."

"But what they do now is like three shows a day. There's no rehearsal, no time to do anything creative, and I didn't find it very satisfying for me as an actor because I'm a person who likes to rehearse and find the little things that make a scene unforgettable. There is no time for that. The actors who do it all the time, I give them credit because ... Boy, it's tough! They do a tremendous job."

JF: Like everyone, you have had your career ups and downs. What do you feel inspired you to stay on course?



Donna wears a Black Strapless Taffeta Dress by designer Carolina Herrera and jewelry from the Nolan Miller Glamour Collection.

DM: "I was obsessed and very driven. I knew what I wanted and what I wanted to do to get there."

JF: How do you feel you inspire other women with their career, social, and personal goals?

DM: "If I do inspire them, and I hope I do, I guess just by the fact that I'm still doing my job at 81. It isn't over yet. My goal right now is to be an inspiration to older

women—women who give up at 60 and sit in the rocking chair. My life would be complete if, at this age, I could be an inspiration to women not to give up."

JF: What word of advice do you have for upcoming actors?

DM: "I always tell actors if you love to act and it's a passion, then go for being an actor. Don't do it because you want to be a

star. If your main goal is to be a star, you will be disappointed. If you love the craft and if stardom comes from it, great. If it doesn't, the most important thing is you're doing what you love to do."

JF: Is there a director you would love to work with or a film project you would love to work on?

DM: "There are so many. I'd love

to do a costume drama. A *Downton Abby*-type project. I would love to work with Meryl Streep and Emma Thompson. They are the most amazing because they are so in the characters. I would love to work with Jordon Peele again, but I don't know. He doesn't seem to use the same people."

JF: How do you feel about Reality television?

DM: "I can't watch reality shows. I did a reality show several years ago produced by my friend Leslie Greif called *Queens of Drama*. When Leslie called me to do it, I said I would not do a reality show. He said let me send you the outline about it. I liked the idea. It was about several actresses trying to get a primetime drama on TV, and they each had their own story that they wanted to get on the air. There was no backstabbing campy stuff that seems to happen on many other reality shows. The situation made you adlib and improvise, sharpening those skills. We all had a fun time doing it."

ACTIVISM

JF: How do you feel about the recent events and changes in America today?

DM: "I've been fighting for women's rights for many years and never thought *Roe v Wade* was in danger. Like many, I thought it was a law that couldn't be overturned, and I'm so disappointed in this country. Trying to outlaw Gay marriage is so abhorrent to me that it makes me crazy. What happened to the division of Church and State? All of the current issues are religious beliefs, and why are they being imposed on us?"

JF: You have been an environmentalist for quite some time. What changes have you seen, and where are we still lacking?

DM: "We are still lacking almost everywhere, but I must say the auto industry is turning around



Donna wears a vintage fur coat and is photographed with Steven Christensen.

and making so many more electric and hybrid vehicles. Hopefully, soon we will be off fossil fuels. It will help us be less dependent on foreign countries, and that's a very good thing."

JF: How can we collectively and individually make a difference to help the environment?

DM: "I used to say recycle, but we are now finding out that so much just isn't getting recycled. We must use less plastic and stay very committed to everything we can do to encourage change."

JF: Thank you, Donna Mills, for being the wonderful, talented person you are and taking the time to speak to CHIC COMPASS magazine.

DM: "My pleasure."

THANK YOU

Donna Mills
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Steven Christensen (Model)
instagram.com/prettycountrybro



Donna wears a vintage fur coat.



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VIVID

THE HEALING ART OF PAMELA NIELSEN

By Brian G. Thornton

VIVID. Vivid color, Vivid content. Vivid passion. Vincent Van Gogh famously painted several self-portraits. More artists have become their subjects than we know. The audacity and irony of a writer painting a picture of an artist are perhaps less likely. I will attempt to paint the story of Pamela Nielsen using a few essential elements. Nielsen, a native of Toronto, brought many elements to the easel to begin this process. Her life up until that moment had all the ingredients to pull off a task like that with confidence and just enough edge to describe her powerful and vividly colorful art pieces. What was unknown at the time was I had been admiring a work of hers at the local popular restaurant DW Bistro for years – I just did not connect the dots.

Now living in Salt Lake City, Nielsen is an attractive sixty-something. After a series of life experiences, including a near-death brush with

COVID after the pandemic, she has taken on this next level of creativity. She has developed several new concepts, processes, and products for working with luxury residential, hospitality, and corporate clientele. Her works are installed nationwide and as far away as Hong Kong. Her career and art, music, and multimedia collaboration with her son Dustin have catapulted her to the forefront of energetic yet peaceful creations. It all emanates from her creative use of bold, vivid colors and innovative materials.

This picture evolves as a conversation wanting to know more about this woman who is immediately intriguing as a conversationalist ... open, warm, and creative. Her family emigrated to Salt Lake City from Canada in 1971, and as a teen, she later met her future husband. "My parents were very supportive of my talents—encouraging me, putting me in lessons. My father had been a professional

soccer player in Italy at a very young age, and I think he had a lot of fears that I would go through some of the things he did, and he wanted to protect me." She wasn't deterred by caution and has taken a confident approach to being a professional artist in all senses of the word.

"I met my husband Scott Nielsen of 41 years at BYU in September 1976, when I was 16 years old, and he was 18. We had one date during that time." After an early graduation from high school because of schooling in Canada, she decided to go away for a while to mature a bit. In 1977, Nielsen became Senator Orrin Hatch's receptionist in Washington, DC, worked for a couple of years, then went back to BYU to complete her education.

Husband Scott currently enjoys his retired status as a former Major League Baseball pitcher, where he



played for the NY Yankees and the Chicago White Sox. They have raised four sons, Dustin (Dusty), Tyler, Brock, and Trey. “One interesting note related to being a professional sports player’s wife is we moved 36 times in 9 years! From the minors to the big leagues—we lived in Bellingham, WA; Chattanooga, TN; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Nashville, TN; Columbus, OH; Albany, NY; New York, NY (with the Yankees); Sarasota, FL; Oahu, HI; Chicago, IL (with the White Sox); and Virginia Beach, VA. It was a crazy ride!”

She attended BYU yet had no formal art training - just the required

art classes you take in school. “In college, I took a calligraphy class. Later, I used to make big announcement banners for my son’s elementary school that would hang on the outside wall of the school with brush lettering and a lot of cartoon characters.”

Further, she has interests in interior design, fashion design, singing, writing music, voiceover work, on-camera work, and dancing. “I have a saying, ‘if I don’t flow, I don’t go.’ I love to flow! I’m extremely right-brained and love creating art of any kind.”

As a creative adolescent, Pamela

recalls, “I just did my “thing.” I was in my world—always creating from the time I was a child. I made my own Halloween costumes, 3-D paper sculptures, and portraits with pastels around 9 or 10 years old.”

Most people can manage one skill at a time, yet she is multi-talented and has had singing and piano lessons. “I took my first singing lesson when my husband played for the White Sox in Chicago. I even tried acting, appearing on various television commercials, TV series, and a movie, plus voiceovers and print work. My maiden name is Gerzeli—and I feel like the “Z”—zig-zagging everywhere.”



LOVE heartZ Collection by Pamela Nielsen

When speaking with Pamela, you don't sense all the activity and breadth of her skills and interest. She commented, "I love doing multiple things, then watching them come to a beautiful completion, sometimes all at once. Maybe that's ADD? That's just how I roll. I get bored easily, so I like trying new things. I also wrote, produced, and sang ten songs for my CD "I Am Free," a 2021 release on Spotify and Apple Music, which is a celebration of God's healing in my life from memories of childhood abuse. And when I turned 50, I took up ballroom dancing. Doing dance competitions in Colorado and Nevada."

VIVID PROCESSES

When I was introduced to Pamela Nielsen in 2017, we were put together to see if there was a synergy to create something special for my then-client, One Turnberry Place. Their reimagined lobby needed an abstract piece that was not too color specific that evoked movement and energy with a sophisticated palette in metallics. Pamela delivered a big statement of ascending metallic flourishes on a floating 8' acrylic panel. GOLD was born. That one introduction on the phone has led to our five-year collaboration. I would not have had GOLD without our unique process of "call

and response." I am continually grateful for the collaboration and understanding of our themes.

Nielsen says, "One of my favorite collaborations! You were a dream designer to work with, and you gave me full creative reign after we honed in on the paint colors and substrate. As an artist—there is nothing better than being given the green light to paint what comes from the heart." Her process, while organic in nature, is very customizable, which is why she is in such demand and able to create these personalized commissioned pieces. "My process with non-designers is very similar: I like

to feel the energy of the space and my clients' energy; view their color schemes, furniture, and design, so I can 'feel' what stroke is right for the look and feel of what they are after. We decide together on what substrate feels right to them, and then I give them samples of my paint color swooshes matching their color scheme. I have them go on my website and pick my art images that 'sing' to them to know what technique I will use. Then I create samples for review before the final art piece is painted. I have created my own tools to paint strokes anywhere from 6" to 30," each creating a different texture—some smooth and some more impasto.

VIVID CONCEPTS

Every magician has tricks up their sleeves, and great chefs and home cooks have that secret ingredient that makes their specialty just a bit more special. When asked about what's new, now, and next for Pamela Nielsen Art, she opened up about her dreams.

"I feel part of my expertise is as a project artist and my passion—BIG PIECES for BIG SPACES. I am creating a catalog of my images for architects and designers to choose from for their projects. And, of course, my favorite thing is to create specifically for their design. That really gets my juices flowing. I want to sit at the table

of a team of architects and designers in the beginning stages of a very modern building featuring my artwork throughout. Originals, large scale prints, SEG graphics, stain glass ceiling, an original in Liquidelements flooring, curved sculptures, digital art, elevator art, and an outdoor mural—etc."

Also noted, "I am planning on pushing the "LOVE BIG" campaign with my LOVE heartZ collection. I envision them BIG on outdoor building murals, billboards, hotel lobbies, meeting rooms, schools, hospitals, subway billboards, rotating on giant screens in Times Square, etc. We are so much in need of LOVE right now in our world—we are craving it."



"Oneness" 10'x4', outdoor metal print by Pamela Nielsen

COLOR CONTENT PASSION

These key elements that help to form a picture are incomplete without understanding what a day in the Studio with Pam is like. “[It] can be very fast!” When not working on a specific project, she will spend weeks creating an art piece in her head, then go into the studio and let it flow from the large palette knives. “Sometimes it flows in an instant, and other times it requires more time. When I’m working on a commissioned piece, I do the same thing. I usually listen to inspirational podcasts or my favorite music—Michael Bublé, Tony Bennett, Earth Wind & Fire, something I can dance to!”



Nielsen’s custom interchangeable backsplashes are printed on E- PANELS, an aluminum composite material.

We have a vivid picture of Pamela Nielsen, her amazing skills, and her unique life experiences, which have only enhanced her talents.

As a wife, mother, artist, singer, and actor, it appears she has taken each move, location, and latitude from a supportive family to continue flowing. The words from her single *I Am Free* bring the vivid image of her healing into focus:

I step through the clouds
The sun is there to warm me
I push through the crowds
And I can finally breathe
Now my eyes can see
The fog has just been lifted
My heart and mind have shifted
I am free, oh yes, I am free

For further inspection of her broad skills, please visit her collection at: pamelanielsen.com

Contact Pamela at:
pamela@pamelanielsen.com
(801) 750-6198


pamelanielsen



i am free



"GOLD" 8' x 4' piece commissioned by designer Brian G Thornton for the Great Room at One Turnberry Place in Las Vegas, NV. (2018)



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ARTICLE BY ANN PARENTI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANN PARENTI & CURTIS MCCOY

THE MAGNIFICENCE OF MAUI



*H*awaii has always had a special place in my heart since I was a young child. When my father was in the military, the Army sent him to Schofield Barracks, the military base on Oahu, Hawaii, and my mother and I moved to be with him. That was around 1965, and the war in Vietnam was going on. That year they sent over U.S. troops, and my father was one of them.

I think we were in Hawaii for less than a month when my father received the transfer papers to leave. There we were, my mother and I, alone in Hawaii for almost two years after that. It wouldn't have been so awful, but my mother couldn't drive! We walked ev-

erywhere we went. Let's just say we were very tan and in tip-top shape when we left the island in 1967 and knew the island a little more intimately than others who just drove by areas of the island to get to their destinations.

To make it a tad more complicated, we lived off barracks in the early days and finally moved into military housing later during our time on the island. It was an experience I have never forgotten, and when we moved away, I knew I would make it back one day to the islands when I got older. I kept in touch with Esther, a childhood friend I made while we were there, and we wrote letters to each other for ten years while growing up.

When I moved to Las Vegas in 1977, my first vacation was Oahu, and I saw her for the first time in all those years! It was a fun reunion.

Fast forward to September 1996, I had just married my husband Curtis, and we decided to honeymoon in Kauai. Sadly, you could still see the ramifications of the Sept. 11, 1992, Hurricane Iniki. That incident damaged or destroyed most of the structures on this 627 square-mile island, with property damage totaling \$1.8 billion. It was recovering slowly by then, but it took years for them to recover fully. However, emotionally, I don't think they ever will. It left one-third of the island homeless, and not one resident on the island



didn't experience some loss or another. It was a beautiful and charming honeymoon, and we enjoyed our trip there, but the next trip we made, we decided upon Maui.

When we got to Maui, I suddenly found "home." There is something about that island that feels like I belong there. To this day, I cannot explain it. Since our first visit, we have visited Maui annually for over 20 years. I suspect we will rack up a few more trips in the future.

We have returned to Kauai a few times for business trips. About 20 years ago, we visited Oahu to see our daughter Sondra marry, and our granddaughter Shyann was born there. Ironically, the family was stationed on the same base as I was as a child. Talk about full circle. A few years before COVID, we did a layover and visited our friends Marilyn and Denny in Oahu for a few days; that was the last time we spent there.

Maui is our home away from home ... at least for a couple of weeks each year. One side of Maui reminds me of our own home in the desert as you drive down the



highway and look to one side and see nothing but red rocks and dry landscaping and then look to the other side of the road and see that gorgeous emerald, blue ocean welcoming us back to the island. It's such a strange combination.

When we arrive, we do what all good tourists who own a timeshare do—stop at the Costco by the airport and get what we need for the trip! We have a unique condo in Kahana Beach that sits as close to the ocean as possible. I am positive there are no other current structures built in the last 30 years or more that can offer this spectacular view. There are only 88 units in total and only 12 one-bedroom condos, and we are blessed to have one of the one-bedroom units. The rest of the resort offers only studio apartments. The best part of this property is every room has an ocean view.

We also have another property that is more traditional in today's times, but you can only see the ocean from afar. That would be the Westin at Kaanapali. The two weeks we spend in Hawaii provide a totally different experience based on the resort where we stay. The Kahana Beach property feels more intimate and homier, and the Westin feels more like a resort with many amenities and action and certainly more people! We seem to have stumbled on the best of both worlds while we vacation there.

What I love about the island is the ease of getting around it. You would be hard pressed to get lost there unless you strayed off the

beaten paths. We like to visit up-country while we are there at least once, and one of the fun trips we make while we are there is the Ali-i Kula Lavender Farm in Kula. The farm is nestled on the slopes of Haleakala National Park, and here the visitors can admire over 55,000 lavender plants and other species like olive trees, hydrangeas, and succulents. The air is always fresh and cool, and the

gardens are very calm and charming. Don't forget to make sure you try their lavender tea and lavender scone while sitting out on the patio enjoying the view.

When we head to that part of the island, we usually make a day of it and drive back through the little towns of Makawao and Paia to do a little shopping and visit friends we have made over the





years at their shops. When life was not so hectic, we would make our last stop at Mama's Fish House in Paia, but now you need reservations months in advance to get in the door. The tourists are back!

One of my favorite secret gardens there is two miles below Makawao Town called The Sacred Garden. It is a lovely Zen Garden with a meditation garden and two labyrinths. They also have a nursery. It is run by the Divine Nature Alliance, a 501c3 public charity that generously sponsors the entrance fee to the garden, so the gardens remain free to the public! It is off

the beaten path, but once you find it, you will visit it time and time again.

I cannot write this article without mentioning the Road to Hana. Take it from someone who has done the trip three or four times over the years—don't try driving this yourself! I did years ago and lived to talk about it, but I will NEVER do that again.

Especially now, it has been under road construction for quite some time, and they do not allow large buses or stopping along the way to view the beautiful waterfalls and

the greenery. It's just too dangerous and annoys the locals! I recommend taking the trip at least once but leave it to the professionals to get you back safe and sound.

One time we were in one of the smaller vans that go up there, and we had to pull over due to the one-lane roads. I happened to look down at the vehicle alongside us and saw Woody Harrelson looking at us with a very annoyed face! I wish I had the thought to pull out my camera, but it was a long time ago, and iPhones were not quite around yet. The look on his face still cracks me up just think-

ing about it today! I am not sure Willy Nelson would be as upset, but maybe so; he lives in Paia, where driving isn't so harrowing.

If you drive to the other side of the island near Wailea, you will find it has a different feel and a higher-end clientele since the Four Seasons Resort is in Wailea. It is a lovely part of the island, too. We have friends who have stayed there over the years, and we drove to meet them for dinner on one of their visits. There is a beautiful outdoor shopping mall called The Shops at Wailea that offers plenty of excellent restaurants and stores to choose from. This year, we stumbled upon a fun Hawaiian Hula show in the mall plaza, and it was delightful to see the costumes, the dancers of all ages, and a Hawaiian band to give the story behind the dance. We were fortunate enough to get a very oversized chair Curtis and I both could sit in to watch the show and enjoy the island breeze and the music.

Of course, there are tons of tours to take while you are in Maui, whether it is scuba diving, a sunset dinner cruise, numerous luaus, or biking to Haleakala and watching the sunrise. There never is a dull moment in Maui unless you want to chill out at the beach or poolside and read a good novel.

Now, let's talk about the food! Wherever you eat—I recommend the fish! I did not have a lousy seafood dinner while dining in Hawaii. Our personal favorites off Front Street are Lahaina Grill, Lahaina Fish Co., and Fleetwood's. For fun, on a less formal night, vis-

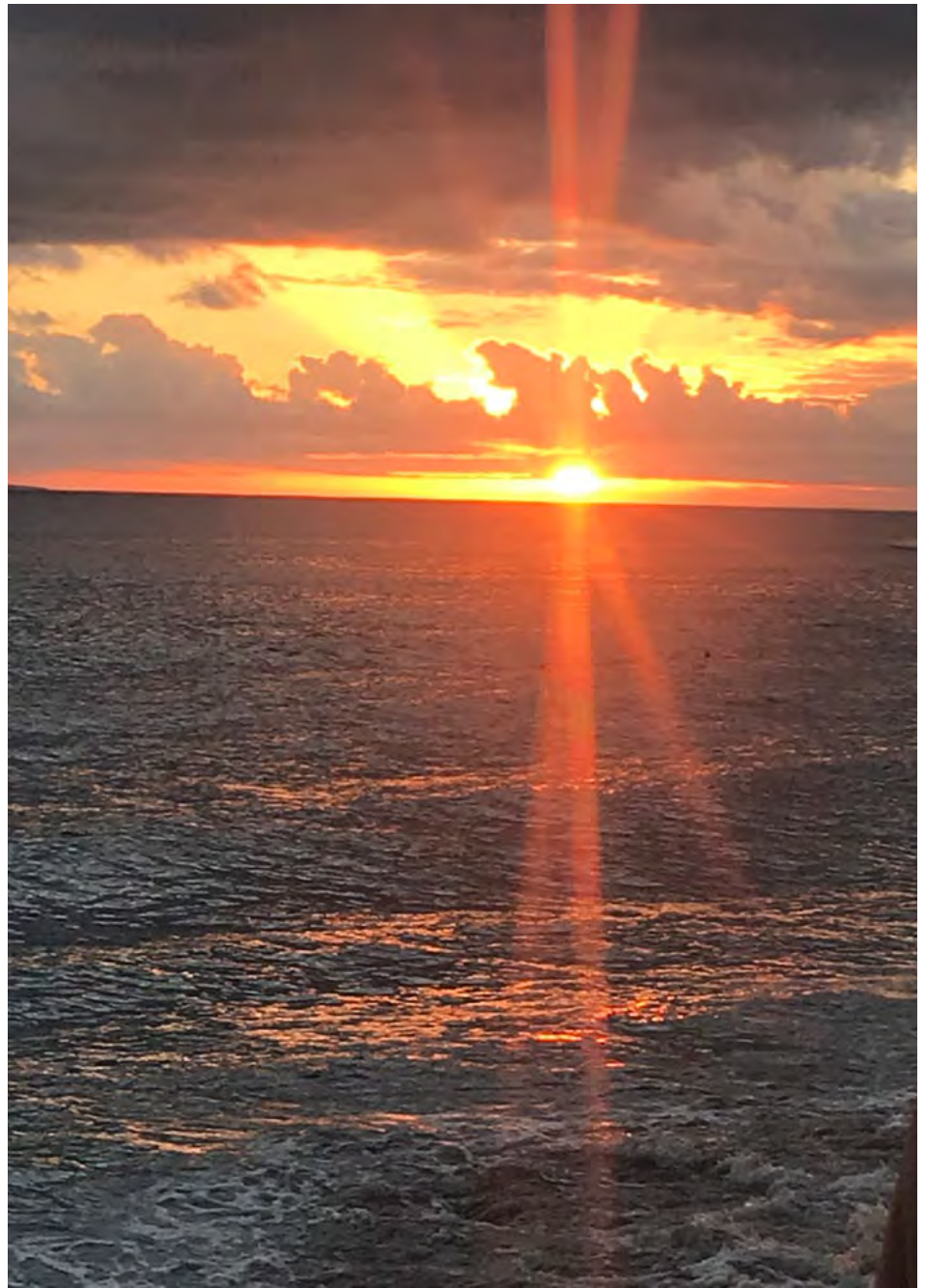
it Cheeseburger in Paradise and Cook Kats Café, known for its burgers and fries and live music most nights.

In the Hyatt, you will find Son's Steakhouse. The Hyatt also has one of the most popular luaus on site. Higher in the mountains, right outside of Kahana, The Plantation House Restaurant and Golf Club has a beautiful brunch. Also, near

Kahana, The Gazebo is a fabulous place for breakfast and turtle watching, but I must warn you, there will be a line.

When you get over to the more mainstream hotels like the Marriott and Westin, Leilani's and Hula Grill are our favorites, too. The good news is that many restaurants are bringing back live music while you dine or have drinks in the bar. Like





many other tourist destinations, live music was devastated during the Covid times. I am happy to see some life returning to the world of tourism and the music industry.

Now that the very restrictive travel rules were lifted this year, Hawaii has gone mad with new visitors, so I recommend booking your restaurants and tours well in advance. Also, upon returning to the

airport, plan more than enough time to get through their agricultural checkpoint, baggage ticketing, baggage drop point, and the extraordinarily long lines through TSA. Let's just say when we were there in June, it took three hours to arrive at our gate, and we had 20 minutes before the flight departed. I am so glad I had a premonition to get there earlier than I would typically have in the past years.

It's always somewhat melancholy when we say aloha to our home away from home every year, but we can hear the island calling us back until we meet again.

Mahalo, Maui, for all the beautiful times, sunsets, rainbows, and memories you have given us over the years, and until next time, you will always be in our hearts.

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A man with short brown hair and a light beard is sitting on a grey sofa with a yellow geometric pattern. He is wearing a grey blazer over a light blue button-down shirt and dark blue jeans. He is smiling and looking directly at the camera. His hands are clasped in his lap. A watch is visible on his left wrist. In the background, there is a chandelier and a window with curtains. A glass of amber liquid is visible in the bottom right corner.

CHRISTOPHER TODD

A TALENT WITHOUT LIMITS

By Joan S. Peck



I was excited to write about Christopher Todd of Christopher Todd Design since his store is right around the corner from where I live. I knew it would be fun when I met him to arrange the interview. Christopher Todd is a handsome, friendly man with twinkly blue eyes and a broad smile that exudes joy in what he does for a living. He is a southern boy, full of stories ... and had many to tell.

Christopher Todd Hall grew up in Monticello, a small town of 8,000 in Arkansas, with parents who adored him and his talent. Christopher says, "they were always proud of me and loved to show off what I created. I was spoiled."

While in 8th grade, Todd (as he was called then) went to the local fair. There, Joyce Arnold had a vendor booth of fresh flowers and arrangements. "I fell in love with one arrangement of various flowers and bamboo sticks. I thought it was one of the most beautiful things I'd ever seen. I insisted my mother buy it."

Was Joyce Arnold your mentor? "In January 1988, Joyce leased her own retail space, and I asked her if I could decorate her window for Valentine's Day. I was 13 then, in the 8th grade, and she let me do it. It was over the top! It became the talk of the town." (smiling).

Ever the entrepreneur, Todd helped Joyce by getting others interested in buying flowers and arrangements for different occasions and presenting her with the orders, allowing her to expand her business.

From there, people sought Todd's help to decorate for hometown weddings, which usually were not lavish events but relatively simple, cost-conscious affairs. However, that changed on one occasion. "When I was 18, Rachel Woolbridge asked me to decorate her wedding at the First Baptist Church. I did it all at Rachel's wedding – the arrangements, décor, food, and flowers. It was so elaborate! It was beyond the beyond! So much so that afterward, the church changed their guidelines for dec-

orating—no more hanging things from the ceiling, etc." (laughing)

In 1993, Todd attended the University of Arkansas at Monticello with a vocal performance major. "I can sing, and I could do all the rest for a party; why not provide the entertainment?"

In 1995, Todd attended the University of North Texas for interior design, which he didn't complete. "It was too restrictive." He is a free spirit who intuitively knows what is needed to design for others.

In 1999 at 24 years old, Todd opened his own florist business in Arkansas called Christopher Todd, which he owned until 2005 when he moved to Las Vegas to work

with MGM Resorts as a special events design artist. He began to use Christopher as his name to make things less confusing.

In 2010, Christopher again branched out on his own as a freelance floral and interior designer. As the business grew, he added a retail store in 2016, Christopher Todd Design, filled with beautiful home décor, fine gifts, and a full-scale design center.

Christopher Todd Design specializes in high-end home design, intimate and corporate events, and floral design. Based in Henderson, NV, the design company composed of Christopher and his highly skilled team of four travel throughout the United States to





serve their clientele. With over 30 years of experience in the design industry, Christopher has become a visionary in the design industry.

"I think what makes me a good designer is that I listen closely to clients' needs and create a great design around their lives ... not mine. I always make sure that functionality is a top priority."

What is the secret sauce for making Christopher Todd Design so successful?

Like most entrepreneurs, Christopher has had his share of ups and downs, but his going beyond for his clients has ensured his success. His company is more of a "Quality of Life" design company.

"Whether decorating one room or the entire house, we may have to make room in the attic or garage to store the items we're not using. Sometimes, that includes rearranging space, labeling boxes, and storing them there. If we see a repair needed, we do that, too. We do it all, which has endeared us to our clients."

Christopher Todd is a renowned designer of extravagant experiences, and one of the most fun things Christopher and his team do well is Event Planning.

"In addition to interior design, I also specialize in planning elegant events, creating beautiful florals, designing seasonal and holiday displays, creating set and stage

designs, and home staging for parties."

Christopher takes a hands-on approach to menu planning, staging, floral design, and creating the perfect ambiance. He leaves no detail untouched, from custom engraved invitations to personalized guest favors.

"Honey, I can throw a party!"

"If there is one thing that amazes people about my work, it's that I can pull something together in a short amount of time. I have had clients call me with only one day's notice before a large party in their home, and I've been able to transform everything from the hearthside to the poolside in a few hours."

One of the greatest joys of his business is HOLIDAY DÉCOR.

"I'm always happy to bring my talent and touch to all the various holidays, but I love going all out and creating something magical for the Christmas holidays."

This holiday decorating started for Christopher at the age of 16. He is often referred to as one of the best in tree décor and design and has an exceptional talent for holiday décor and display. That has allowed him to work in fine homes, luxury hotels, churches, and retail spaces throughout the United

States, including the home of his all-time favorite celebrity, Vanessa Williams. Christopher's unique, one-of-a-kind touch makes his holiday design not only breathtaking but timeless. Christopher and his team work with existing décor honoring family traditions, or they can create a new and fresh theme of class and sophistication for your interior and exterior.

If you are lucky enough to have Christopher Todd Design create your special magical place, whether for everyday living, the holidays, or an event or party, you're in for a treat.

Some of Christopher Todd's accolades include:

- Floral Designer for the 2004 Academy Awards
- Floral Designer for California's Tournament of Rose Parade
- Artistic and Visual Designer for the Launch of the Range Rover L405
- Artistic and Visual Designer for the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event.
- Artistic Designer for the 2015 Rolls-Royce Pebble Beach Concours D'Elegance
- Artistic Designer for the 2022 Audi Pebble Beach Car Week

During today's dark times, it is refreshing to walk into a store that makes you stop and take in the pleasure of beautiful things. More so, Christopher Todd Design has a peaceful atmosphere that causes you to sigh with pleasure. While there, I was introduced to his team of four highly talented people: Cody Poe, Claudia Costantino, Denise Henocque, and A.J. Bell. It was immediately apparent there was camaraderie among them and respect and high regard for what each brought to the table. There is no doubt that Christopher Todd and his team are the go-to people to design whatever you have in mind or to allow him to create what he sees for you. You won't regret it.

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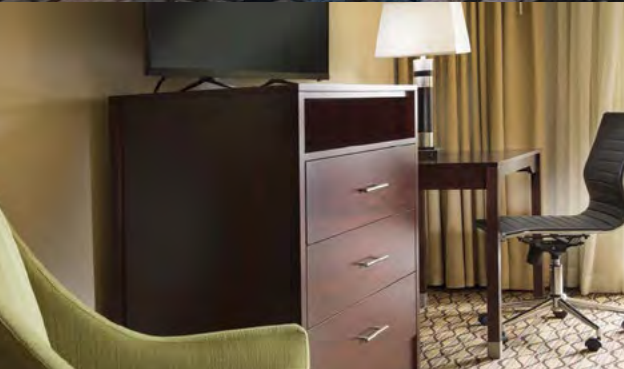


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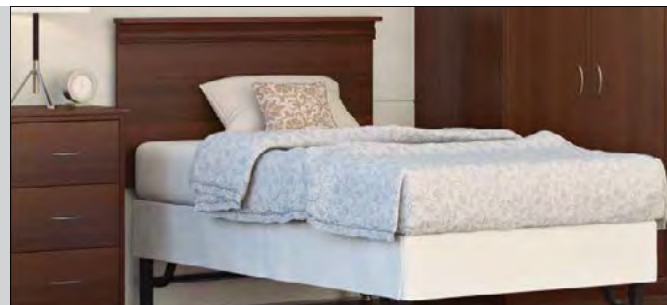


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faith

BEAUTY MEETS BRAVERY

LAS VEGAS CANCER SURVIVOR TURNS DREAM OF OWNING A SALON INTO A REALITY

By Heather Turk

When Susan Salas got laid off from her job as a nail technician at The Salon at Wynn Las Vegas during the COVID-19 pandemic—a position she held for 16 years—she decided to use her free time to follow her dreams.

“Ever since I was a kid, I’ve always loved to make people feel good about themselves,” Salas told *Chic Compass*. “My mother was the one who exposed me to facials at a very early age (11 years old). She would take me to her Mary Kay classes, and I was so fascinated by all the makeup and skin products people would use on themselves. I always dreamed of opening my own salon with my own twist. I kept telling myself that this was my calling, and when the timing was right, it would happen.”

However, the day Salas was going to sign the lease to transform a former Kidz Rule Indoor Play & Party Center in Southwest Las Vegas into the salon of her dreams, she received the worst news of her life—she had breast cancer.



Salas said that she knew “the chemicals, odors, and in-and-out mentality” most salons have were all things she wanted to change when opening her salon. Photo by Nicole Szewczyk

“My thoughts went from ‘Do I give up on what I thought I was meant to do?’ to ‘Do I fight for my life and what I was meant to do?’” Salas recalled. “It was then and there that I decided to fight harder than I have ever fought. Nothing could have prepared me for my battle with chemo—my side effects were worse than I could have ever imagined—but the business needed me, and I needed it.”

On December 10, 2021, just two weeks after Salas underwent a double mastectomy, Desert Beauty Lab opened its doors at 7260 S. Cimarron Road. While Salas was advised after her long surgery (more than 6 hours due to the additional removal of her lymph nodes) to take six to eight weeks to heal, the day following her operation, she made herself walk without pain pills. Eight days later, Salas was busy assembling furniture at her salon and doing as much as possible to prepare everything for its grand opening.

Far from your typical salon, Desert Beauty Lab is a holistic luxury salon where beauty organically coexists with wellness. It offers reasonably priced manicures, pedicures, facials, and hair services for women, men, and even little “princesses.” It uses only top-of-the-line products that are safe and organic in its treatments, like FarmHouse Fresh, Eminence, and the vegan nail polish line, sundays.

“Desert Beauty Lab is a place where you can embark on a journey of transformative services that focus on the mind and body,” Salas said. “Our salon smells differ-



Desert Beauty Lab offers a high-end salon experience off-Strip. Photo by KBS Photography

ent since there are no fumes from acrylic nails, as we have chosen to offer Aprés Gel-X nail extensions as a cleaner and healthier alternative to acrylics. It also feels different, as our guests are treated like family. Simply put, Desert Beauty Lab is a different realm altogether, and I hope that what we do can become a new concept for other local salons.”

Guests are given VIP treatment from the moment they arrive at Desert Beauty Lab by being offered a complimentary beverage to enjoy, including (for adults) champagne, wine, or beer. They can also

book a wide range of services not typically found at your neighborhood salon. Highlights include the unique men’s Honey Beer Bath Manicure, which includes a beer bath soak to soften rough skin, and the rejuvenating Wine Me Down women’s pedicure that includes a fragrant Cabernet scrub to leave feet feeling silky smooth. Additionally, guests can customize their manicures and pedicures by adding on an invigorating Theragun deep muscle massage or the use of relaxing guided meditation headsets, the latter of which pairs perfectly with the salon’s zero-degree gravity pedicure chairs.

“Desert Beauty Lab is a holistic luxury salon where beauty organically coexists with wellness.”



While salon-goers can book treatments à la carte, monthly membership packages are also available, providing additional benefits for frequent guests. Since Salas knows more than anyone that life can be unpredictable, any unused services can be rolled over to the following month for members to use. Additionally, one unused monthly service can be gifted to friends or family for a nominal transfer fee, which is practically unheard of at other salons.

Left: Guests can put a little pep back in their step by adding a Theragun massage to their pedicure.

Below: Desert Beauty Lab features a menu of innovative and health-conscious services that refrain from using harsh or abrasive chemicals.

Photos by KBS Photography





Desert Beauty Lab has zero-degree gravity pedicure chairs for guests to lounge in while their feet are being pampered. Photo courtesy of Desert Beauty Lab.

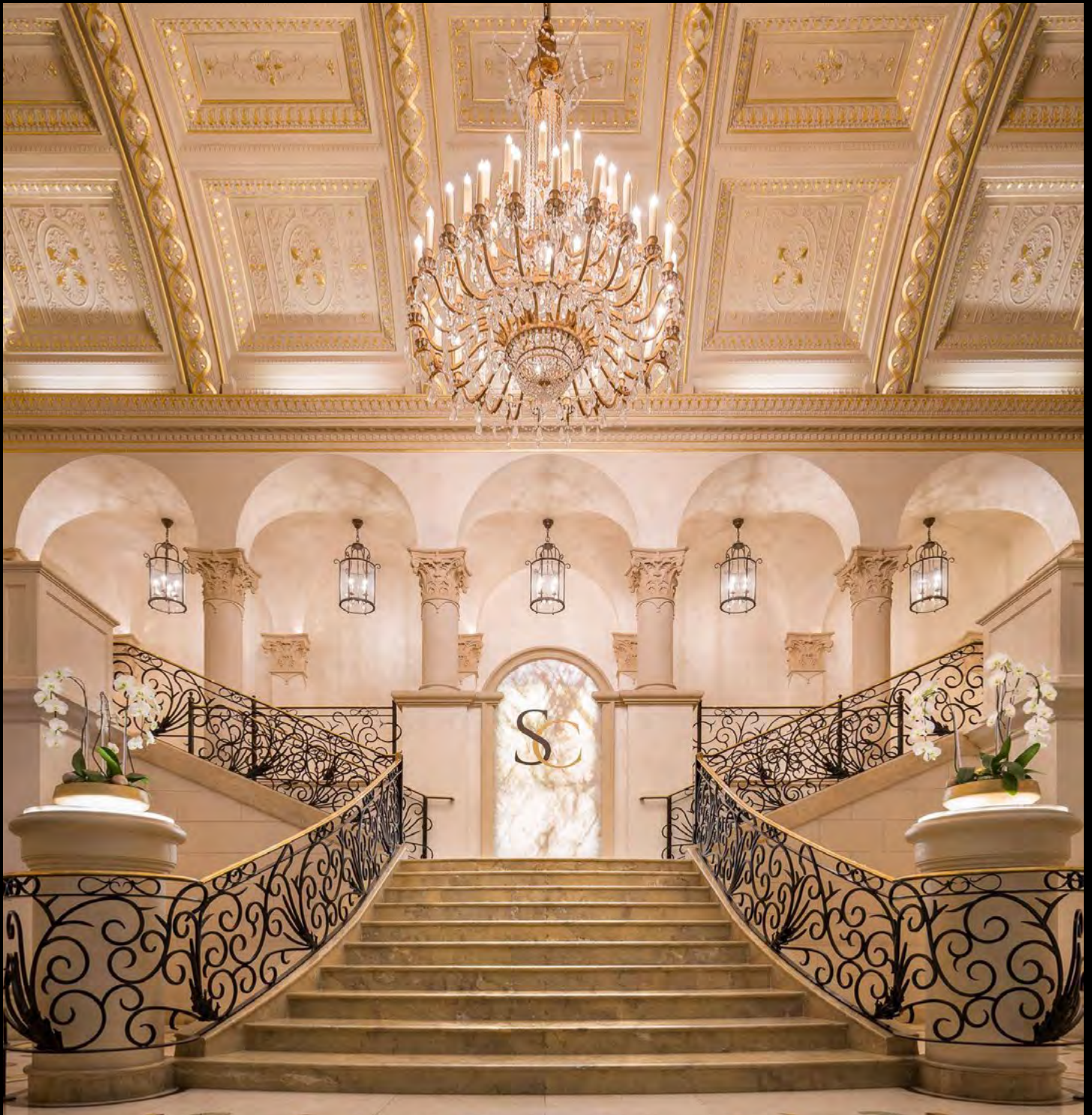
With Desert Beauty Lab's first anniversary on the horizon, Salas continues to look toward the future. She noted that she would love to expand the salon to different parts of Las Vegas "when the time is right" and is in the process of creating her own product line to use at the salon. Most importantly, though, the woman who opened a beauty salon in Sin City that believes wellness is a necessity is working hard to take care of herself.

"I am in the recovery phase right now," the mother of three said. "I lost a lot of weight and am still trying to gain energy through my food intake. I have started to work out again, though—it feels good going back to the gym and getting some of me back. I have two more surgeries to go, but I will be here for a long time living the best life I can."

As for what words of encouragement the inspiring salon owner

would offer to those still trying to turn their dreams into a reality, Salas simply said, "If it is a thought, it can become a reality. Become obsessed with what you want, and do not let that slip away from you. Don't let people tell you who you are—be you and love you."

To see the salon's complete menu of services, visit:
desertbeautylab.com



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THE VISUAL POETRY OF ARTIST GIG DEPIO

By Beth Ilagan

Nevada (particularly Las Vegas) is so proud to have a very talented, creative, and radical artist in residence with a unique style of his own! I am referring to Gig Depio, a local painter who focuses mainly on public art and large-scale oil paintings. Once you see one of his paintings, it will forever be imprinted on your memory.

Aside from creating gigantic works of art, his style is one of a kind, best described in strong rough strokes of massive swirls and converging lines. His painting technique is "Alla Prima," meaning wet-on-wet, layering wet paint over previously administered layers of wet paint in one sitting. He uses oil as his medium for canvas, board, and murals (artwork applied directly to a wall).

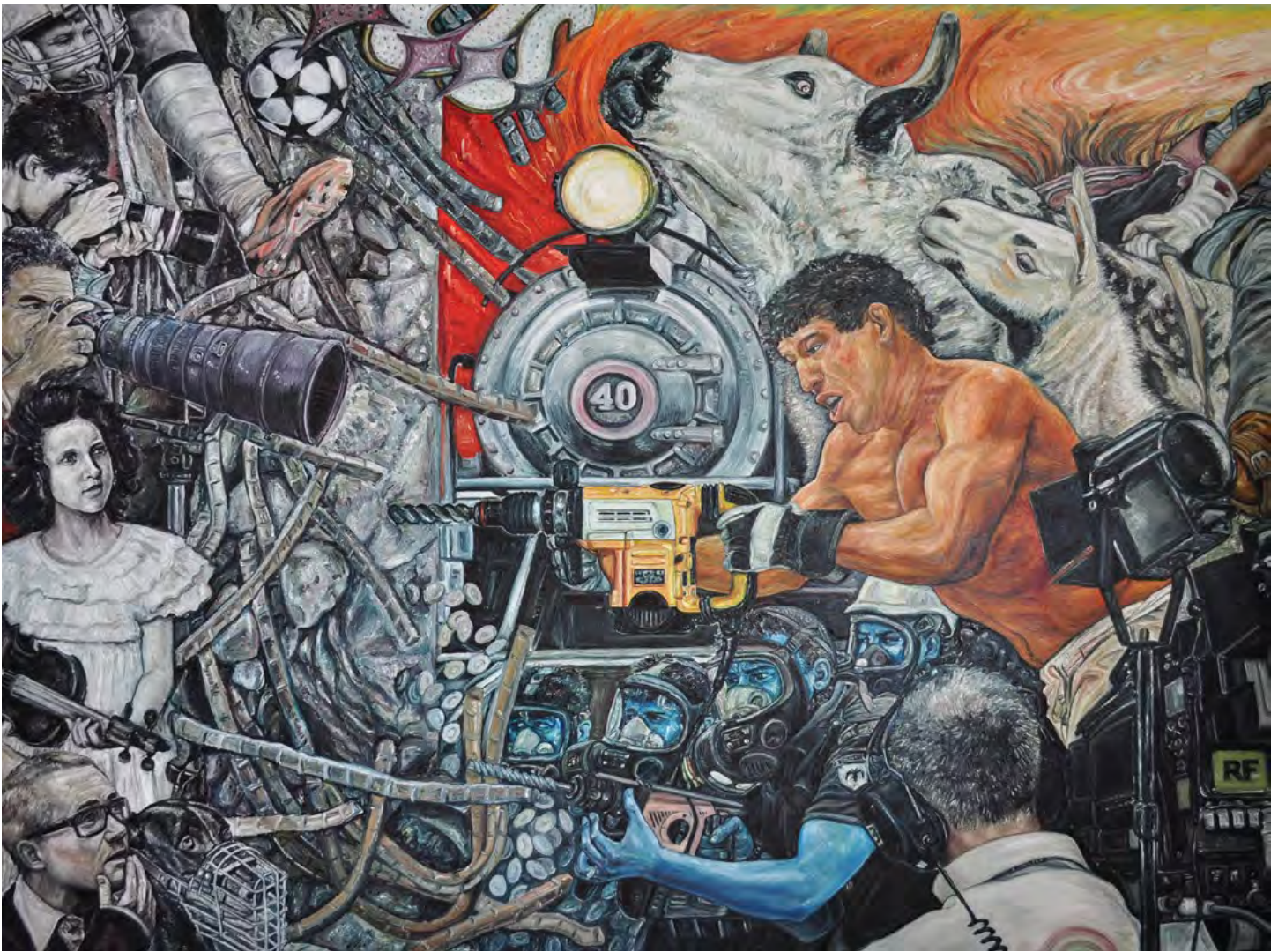
Depio's topics cover American culture and its history, particularly the exploration of the unfamiliar west and its later expansion, industri-

alization, entertainment, and creative destruction. Also, he depicts the American influence across the globe and the convergence of American, Philippine, and Spanish histories at the turn of the 20th century and in contemporary society. Artists who have influenced his style of painting include Fernando

Amorsolo, Diego Velasquez, Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, and Tintoretto.

According to Depio, "depicting the past is a way to understand how we arrived in the present." He incorporates history and social politics in his realist paintings. He presents





Breaking Armistice - 96" x 72" Oil on Canvas - 2014 - Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art Collection

the conjunctions of contemporary and historical forces in the form of intense, often large-scale figurative compositions. To fully appreciate his art, it has to be seen in person, to feel it, and truly experience his message in the painting.

Depio has been an exponent for public, non-profit, and independent art in Nevada since 2009. A recipient of the 2016 Nevada Arts Council Fellowship Grant in Painting, Depio has exhibited across Nevada, with shows at the Nevada Museum of Art, the University of Nevada Las Vegas, the Uni-





versity of Nevada Reno, and the Clark County Winchester Cultural Center Gallery, among others. He has extended his advocacy internationally to include exhibitions with the National Commission for Culture and Arts (NCCA), Manila, Philippines, in 2018 and 2019; the 58th Venice Biennale Giudecca Art District (GAD), Venice, Italy; and the Three Works Gallery in Scarborough, Yorkshire, United Kingdom.

He was born in the Philippines in 1977. He came from a family of artists—his father, Professor Gig de Pio, Sr. (School of Fine Arts, University of the Philippines), his mother, Fe Esterlina, who used to be the Art Director for Sampaguita Pictures (a Philippine film production company) and an art gallery owner, and two out of four other brothers, Vincent and Simkin who are also very accomplished painters.

That immersive experience of working in an art studio at a young age significantly influenced his artistic journey. His very first mentor was his father. In high school, Depio and his brothers used to work as assistants in their father's studio and framing shop. He spent countless hours helping his father paint portraits and murals. Also, after school, he hung around the film studios where his mother worked. These past artistic experiences



played a huge role in how things come together in his work, seeing his paintings as a "stage" to manifest an evolving worldview.

Initially, he dabbled in business school at the Ateneo University in Manila before he decided to become a professional artist. He moved to the United States in 2002 and lived in cities like Boston, San Jose, and Los Angeles before planting himself permanently

in Las Vegas. One of the largest pieces he has painted is a 40' x 12' two-dimensional oil on canvas titled "Level the Playing Field" commissioned by the Clark County Government, which took about 15 months of grueling studio work, 12-14 hours a day.

Recently, he painted a 40' x 11' mural for the Moapa Valley Community Center titled "Through the Muddy." He also exhibited his

*Above: Level the Playing Field
156" x 78" - Oil on Canvas - 2022
City of Las Vegas Public Art
Collection*



work "Gig Depio: Americana with Cadmium Orange" at the Capital City Arts Initiative (CCAI) and the CCAI Courthouse Gallery in Carson City.

Friends and colleagues who helped him along the way include Robert Tracy at UNLV and Darren Johnson of the Las Vegas-Clark County Library Galleries. Colleagues overseas include Italian curator Pier Paolo Scelsi, Chris Shaw of Three Works Gallery, Phil King of Turps Painting School, Egai Fernandez of the National Commission of Culture and Arts in the Philippines, and Manuel Ocampo from Spain/Philippines, among many others.

Depio says, "It's in these conversations online and in real life where we begin to deeply learn about how we are situated in this world of competing world views. The greatest accomplishment of an artist is to strive to know oneself as an individual among individuals." Deadlines and boredom typically motivate him to get up in the morning. He devotes up to 12-14 hours of painting, mostly done at night. His hobbies include construction, carpentry, and reading about metaphysics.

When asked what's new in the art world, Depio responded, "the greatest challenge or barrier in the art world is the political aspect

of art. One has to actually see and fully appreciate your work to be recognized in the field of art. When asked what is now trending in the artworld, Depio states that NFTs are the newest thing. These are unique pieces of cryptographic tokens linked to a blockchain, such as Bitcoin and Ethereum, that cannot be replicated. "Tokenizing" these real-world tangible assets or art makes buying, selling, and trading them more efficient while reducing the probability of fraud."

What puts a smile on Gig's face is finishing a giant piece of work. He loves the process of creating something ... and we're so glad he does.



For more information:
gigdepio.com

Above: Through the Muddy
480" x 144" - Oil on Canvas - 2018
Clark County Public Art Collection

Right: Gig Depio stands beside
Catch 22 - 96" x 48" - Oil on
Canvas - 2013



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JOAN S. PECK is a writer of both non-fiction and fiction books. She first began writing in 2009 as an author of spiritual non-fiction books. *Prime Threat Shattering the Power of Addiction* won a Top Shelf Book Award Nominee. Nine years later, she published her first fiction books under the pen name J.S. Peck and won a Top Pick for Spirited Woman for *Death on the Strip*, the first book of her mystery Death Card Series. Throughout her fiction books, Joan has become known for expressing addiction and human sex trafficking concerns through her strong, likable characters. She has an extraordinary writing ability that brings the reader into each book's storyline, holding them hostage until the end.

Her books are available on all book sites and her website – www.joanspeck.com

grace

A SHOW OF SANDS!

Appreciating The Art of Niki J Sands

By Stacey Gualandi

When self-taught painter Niki J Sands first put oil to canvas in the mid-90s, she was ready to give up. “I took the painting and said, ‘Oh God, that is just awful,’ admits Sands. “So, I rolled it up and threw it in the garbage.”

Had she not changed her mind and kept that original crumpled portrait, she might have thrown away an entire career. (“I realized it wasn’t thaaaaat bad.”)

Since then, this former Detroit dental office manager has made a name for herself as a successful Las Vegas-based contemporary artist. Her figurative style is equal parts surrealism and cubism, with a hint of the abstract.

As a young girl, Niki always loved sketching her dad. “I love looking at people’s faces,” and she says she especially loved drawing people’s hands—one of the more challenging parts of the human form.

While painting came later in life, she now receives numerous com-



Photo of Niki by Flo Li, Del Mar, California



“With a mutual fondness for wine (and our Detroit roots), what better place than a tasting room for Niki and me to grab a glass of wine and gab about her career, her process, and how you can now “wear” a Niki J Sands original.”

CHIC COMPASS: How did your career as an artist first get off the ground?

NIKI J SANDS: I moved from Michigan to Las Vegas and would spend all my time at the Sahara West Library, where there is a beautiful museum, and I pored over art books. They were having their Spring art exhibits for local people, and when my older sister came out to visit, she saw my crumpled painting...

CHIC: ...the one from the trash?



Above Left: Fish Heads II by Niki Sands, Oil on Canvas

Above: 1st Painting - This is the very first painting that Niki ever created. She crumpled it up and threw it away before changing her mind and keeping it.

missions and charity donation requests, and her pieces are often on display at local events, art festivals, and restaurants around the country.

In fact, for the past five years, a rotating collection of her artwork hangs inside the Vegas Valley Winery, Clark County, Nevada’s only wine tasting room.

Owner Patty Peters wanted to highlight a local artist, and she has known (and bought) Niki’s work forever. Now she plans to hold a show in early 2023 featuring who else? Niki Sands.

“It’s all about the colors,” says Peters. “Everything about her screams art. You think you’ve got her down, and she comes up with a new idea, a new way of painting. It blows your socks off.”



Poetic Garden by Niki Sands

NIKI: Yes, and she said, "Oh, I love this! We're gonna submit it to this art exhibit!" And I said, "No, we're not!" And she says, "Yeah, we are." And sure enough, it got into the exhibit! I still have the painting.

CHIC: How did your work progress after that?

NIKI: I made my daughter a painting, and her boss saw it and said, "Oh God, you think your mom can paint me a Viking? I'll pay her!" Then my daughter's high school was doing a Shakespeare play, and they needed a painting of a queen, and I said I'll do that and gave it to the school. So basically, it started with me giving things away. Haha.

CHIC: When did you finally start earning money for your art?

NIKI: I sold on eBay, and I would sell to people all over the world. It wasn't a lot of money, but I would do a small painting and sell it. And one of my eBay customers was from Canada. When I told him I was doing my first show, he sent this gorgeous bouquet of flowers. I thought, "Oh my God, this is so crazy," to have a guy from Canada who I've never met in my life take to my work and buy a lot of it. In fact, he has some of my very first pieces, so that's nice.

CHIC: How has your work evolved?

NIKI: There were a lot more faces in the beginning, what I called "lonely figures." They were just the backs of women. I did a lot of that. Maybe it was subconsciously me because I was feeling alone. I had lost my parents and moved away from my whole family. I did not

have a plan, and people thought I went a little cuckoo ... ha! I was just divorced and had a young daughter. It was a very challenging time.

CHIC: What is your process?

NIKI: Well, when I'm doing work just to do work, it's very intuitive. A lot of it has to do with what's going on in my world and our crazy world. I'm constantly experimenting still. I'm now working with mixed media and a cold wax method. To grow as an artist, you need to pull out of your comfort zone. My comfort zone is just being in my studio by myself with a glass of wine ... ha!

CHIC: What or who inspires you?

NIKI: My Greek godmother Nouna was a heavy-set woman with black hair who became my muse. All of my characters have a similar look to them. [Also] I love animals. My mom took me to Greece when I was 11, and seeing all the statues, the ancient art, the drawings, the paintings, and all of that, I was in heaven. When I was young, I wanted to be a marine biologist. I love the ocean and all that, so I've been drawn to nature very much all my life.

CHIC: How much of your work is about nature?

NIKI: I do a lot of the fish things. And I put a lot of rabbits in my work because my mom taught me how to draw them. That was the only thing she knew how to draw!



Desert Queen - Oil on Canvas



Photo of Niki by Flo Li, Del Mar, California

Fish Heads, Oil on Canvas



CHIC: What sets you apart as an artist?

NIKI: I think my art connects with people. Certain things speak to people, and they have an emotional connection to them.

CHIC: Where else can we see your work?

NIKI: My friend's son, Nino Cutraro, lives in California, and he makes clothing (deflorencio.com) with my paintings on it. He does all the sewing! I've known him since he was born. He said, "I really like your work," and I said, "I'm gonna give you whatever you want, and when you make it big, you can take care of your Auntie!" Haha!!

CHIC: How would you like to be known?

NIKI: Just as a person who loves to create. If you connect with my work and feel like you'll have it for the rest of your life and pass it on to your kids, I find that touches my heart.

CHIC: Thank you, Niki! I think we are all grateful you didn't take out the trash years ago. :)

Visit Niki's website at:
nikijsands.com



Fashion by Nino Cutraro, Artwork by Niki Sands



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THE GENIUS OF RITA DEANIN ABBEY

By Kendall Hardin

Photography courtesy of Robert Rock Belliveau and Rita Deanin Abbey Foundation



Bridge Mountain Mural (acrylic)

News flash for Las Vegas culture vultures! A stunning new museum formally opens its doors this fall to showcase the life work of a prolific, remarkable local artist extraordinaire. Can you name the artist? And the location of this treasure?

Although most locals would not recognize Rita Deanin Abbey as an artist, many would recognize several of her landmark pieces in the community. They include *Spirit Tower*, the 20ft. one-ton Corten steel sculpture greeting visitors to the Summerlin Library and Performing Arts Center, or the monumental *Isaiah Stained-Glass Windows* (16

windows 10'x 2' each) at Temple Beth Shalom. Visitors to UNLV's Judy Bayley Theatre before 2000 will recall *Bridge Mountain* (1974), the massive lobby mural welcoming audiences with a 30' span of riotous color and undulating energy, now happily at home in Abbey's museum.

Born to immigrant parents from Russia and Poland in 1930, Abbey was the youngest of four children reared in New Jersey. Like many gifted high-achievers, she knew at the early age of eight that she wanted to become an artist. By the time she was 14, she was taking the train to New York City to study

at the Naum Michael Los School of Art. She continued her studies at the prestigious Art Students League, Goddard College, and the Hans Hoffman School of Art with the iconic master himself.

Abbey journeyed from the East to Albuquerque in 1950 to work on her MFA degree at the University of New Mexico, where her spiritual affinity with the natural world of the desert landscapes of the Southwest infused her soul and began to define her work. At the university, she met her husband, author and environmental activist Edward Paul Abbey, and the father of her two sons, Joshua and Aaron.



Spirit Tower at Summerlin Library (detail)

The couple divorced after 13 years, and Abbey moved to Las Vegas in 1964 to join the arts faculty in the early days of UNLV. In addition to teaching classes in drawing, painting, and color theory (wildly celebrated by her students), she reached out to develop interdisciplinary courses with the school's science department, a radical and innovative move at the time.

Artist James Stanford was one of her early students. "After seeing my drawings, Rita organized a professional critique of my work, which ultimately led to my receiving a scholarship that spurred my career as an artist," he recalled.

"The art world was a challenge for any woman in the 60s, but Rita stood her ground; she was no milk

toast," he continued. "She was focused, in charge, and a tough taskmaster, a perfectionist. She used words I had to look up after class and pushed me to work in broader mediums. I thought she was amazing."

When Stanford returned to Las Vegas from graduate school in the Northwest, he joined the faculty at UNLV, where he and Abbey taught together for over a decade. After 22 years of teaching and being the lone tenured female professor in the department for many years, she achieved *Emeritus of Art* in 1987 - all the while producing series after series of artworks of her own in an astonishing array of mediums.

Another student, Vicki Richardson, founder of Left of Center Gallery, received the prestigious Governor's Arts Award at the same time as Abbey in 1986. "I mentioned Rita in my acceptance speech out of respect and admiration for both her artwork and the impact she had on my art and career."

"When Rita invited me to visit her studio and the early phase of the Museum build-out, I was awestruck - just blown away by the breadth of what she had already accomplished."

As to what made Abbey so boundlessly creative and prolific, "She was always evolving," Richardson mused. "I think she explored each medium until she felt she had conquered it as far as she could, and then she seized a new challenge."

In Her Own Words:

"The infinite wonder of Nature has had the greatest influence on my work. I have explored desert landscapes and have been deeply affected by rock formations, vistas, sunsets, plants and wildlife, rivers, and the colors and textures of secret canyons. These places communicate and resonate with my own nature.

"My approach to making art is predominately intuitional rather than analytical. What feels "right" determines the direction. I am more interested in the search and discovery aspects of making art than in repeating what I have done and already seem to know.

"Even in large-scale works, I take risks and make changes. The realization that developing work with total freedom is an illusion forces me to grapple with my limitations and strive harder to reach my inner voice."

- Rita Deanin Abbey

Nenana River, Denali (porcelain enamel, fired on metal)





Wall of Creation (polyester resin and fiberglass)

In 1985 Abbey married Robert Rock Belliveau, co-founder of Associated Pathologists Laboratories, later acquired by Quest Diagnostics. As a couple, they were perfectly matched. Together, they created a home and studio in the Northwest city's then wide-open spaces, with Dr. Belliveau backing his wife's work and accompanying her to shows, workshops, and work sites.

"I always said Robert was Rita's Medici and her biggest fan," noted Bill Weaver, who first met the couple at the Shidoni Foundry in Santa Fe, where Abbey was fabricating her colossal *Spirit Tower* commission in 1995.

"Rita had a tireless work ethic. She was very exacting and critical about the quality of every detail,

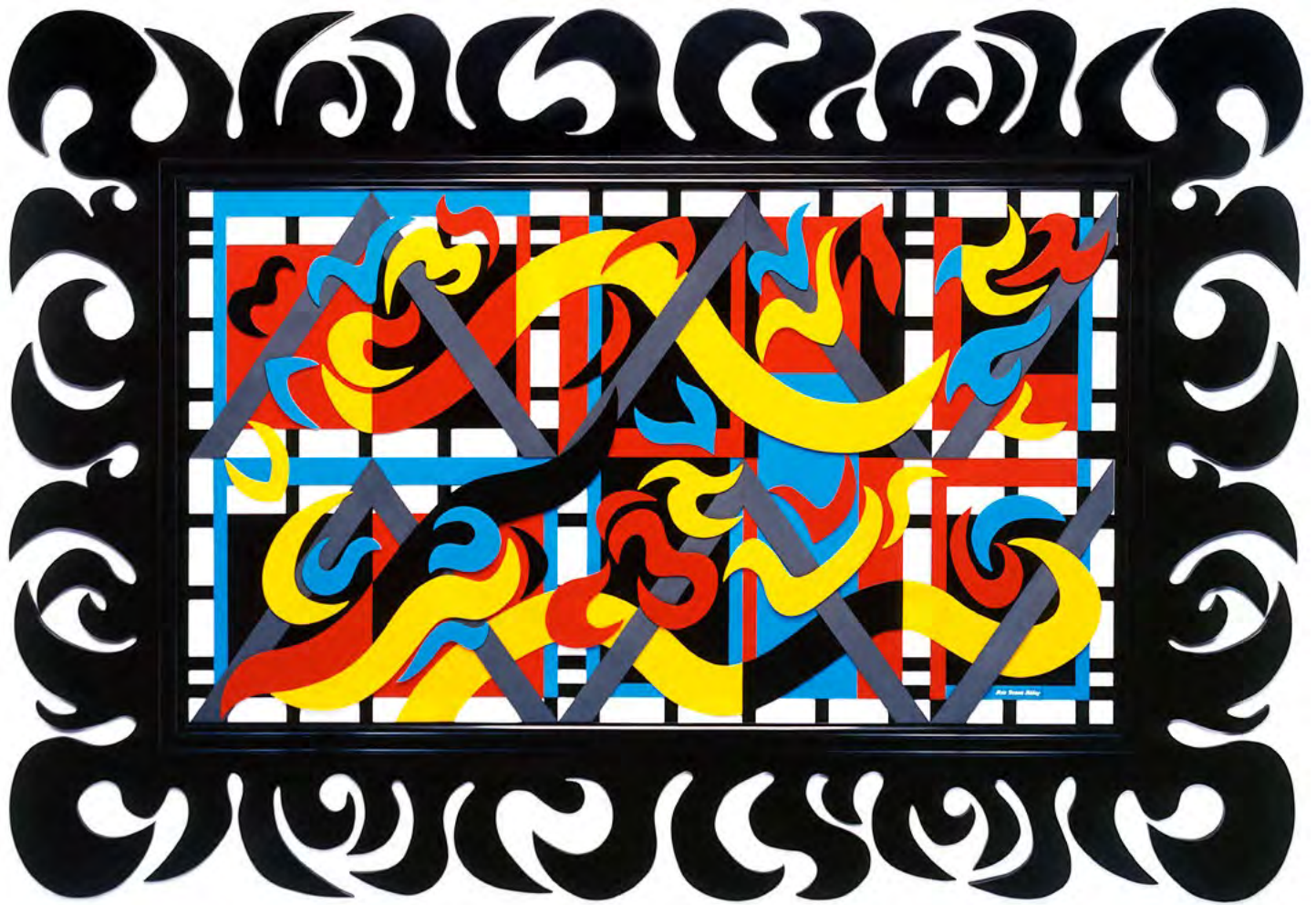
down to the perfect color tone of the patina, which drove us wild," he recalled with a laugh. "But each piece was masterful. Art was everything to her."

In 1988, the Palm Springs Art Museum exhibited a 35-year retrospective of Abbey's work in partnership with the Las Vegas Natural History Museum and UNLV. This landmark exhibition was organized by Palm Springs chief curator Katherine Plake Hough. She brought together 20 series from Abbey's work, regrouping them into twelve general categories defined by format and theme rather than chronological order. This ordering of Abbey's work would provide a future blueprint for how works would be showcased in Abbey's museum some 25 years later.

Hough and Abbey forged an enduring friendship together, with Hough serving today as curator of the Las Vegas Museum. Laura Sanders, Abbey's long-time architect (1990 - 2006), ably stepped into the director's role.

After several bouts with architects, Abbey took on the museum's design herself, partnering with general contractor Scott Blaser, a neighbor nearby. "Rita was definitely a hands-on artist," he smiled. "She would change her mind from time to time. It was a long, very challenging, and sometimes tedious process, but the outcome was worth every moment we worked together."

The facility build-out started in the spring of 2011 and finished a decade later in 2021. "Rita always



Celebration (plexiglass)

insisted that a building is more than a structure," Blaser added. "To her, every detail of the building is living art. 'Architecture has a soul, a spiritual life of its own,' she would continually remind me."

The museum currently occupies 10,500 square feet of space on ten acres off Northwest Ann Road, now encircled by residential developments. The footprint also includes a courtyard, desert garden, outdoor sculpture park, and Abbey's studio and home, which also bears her mark. One should note that the artist even designed all the doors and gateways to the museum, garden, and residence.

Inside the museum are twelve bays showcasing 175 pieces of her work, plus a small shop promoting some of Abbey's books and prints. The museum, airily lit with skylights and glistening travertine floors, boasts soaring spaces for large-scale works and modulates into more intimate rooms for smaller pieces.

As one rounds each corner, new visual surprises wow and seduce the visitor. Her monumental works are certainly knock-outs, like the semi-circular 20'x40' *Wall of Creation* (1970-71), commissioned by Temple Beth Shalom, the 6.6'x9.6' plexiglass relief *Celebration* (1996), and the *Bridge Mountain*

mentioned before. But I'm equally drawn to her more diminutive *Rivertrip Series* (1971-77), providing a visual and literary diary of her experience on a six-day raft trip on the Colorado River through Cataract Canyon.

Were I an art thief, I'd abscond with all of her vibrant abstract expressionist paintings from the 50s that rival any icon of that era. While all her large-scale sculptures on the grounds are impressive, like the 22-ton *Hidden Pass*, I am drawn to the elegant *Holocaust* (2000), her redemptive symbolic devolution of the Star of David. And, of course, to *Snakewash* (2004), the clever 62-foot Corten



Above: Snakewash

Right: Holocaust (stainless steel)





Isaiah Stained-Glass Windows (8 of 16)

steel ground sculpture slithering through her *Gan-Or* garden.

I can't think of another contemporary artist who has worked in so many different mediums (including Picasso!): painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, porcelain enamel fired on steel, computer art, stained glass, epoxy-resin, torn paper collage, figurative and landscape works, calligraphy, plastics, encaustic, watercolor, wood and mixed media of all kinds! A keen intellect, Abbey also penned poetry and published numerous books. Unlike many visual artists, she could verbalize her creative process with laser-sharp insight.

To witness firsthand sixty-odd years of a brilliant artist's life work in one exquisite space designed by that artist is an extraordinary, one-of-a-kind experience. The Rita Deanin Abbey Museum campus will

soon open its doors as a unique, unparalleled cultural amenity for the Southern Nevada community. How it will be marketed, programmed, and sustained is now in the hands of the museum's founding foundation board and staff.

Admittedly, few artists enjoy the financial and professional support Abbey had to advance her work. Still, the sheer breadth and caliber of her work elevate this museum far above that of a vanity showcase. Like the desert, her creation shines like a rare unfolding jewel, exploding into bloom after a fierce downpour.

Abbey died on the first day of spring last year at the age of 90. Arts leader Patrick Gaffey described her as "the most important unknown artist in Southern Nevada." A Zen master might have whispered, "Inspired by the forces of

nature, she morphed into a mega creative force herself."

Looking back, Abbey participated in 50-some individual exhibitions and more than 100 national and international group shows. She was still mounting installations well into her 80s. Among her many accolades and awards, she received the Las Vegas Arts Commission's *Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in the Arts* in 2012.

Rita Deanin Abbey has left behind a priceless legacy to inspire future generations of artists, art historians, and art lovers of all ages. Perhaps Vicki Richardson summed it up best as she reminisced about her first visit.

"I drove over the hill onto the grounds and wandered through this amazing treasure jam-packed with incredible work. I was over-



Above: Rivertrip Series: "Anonymity"

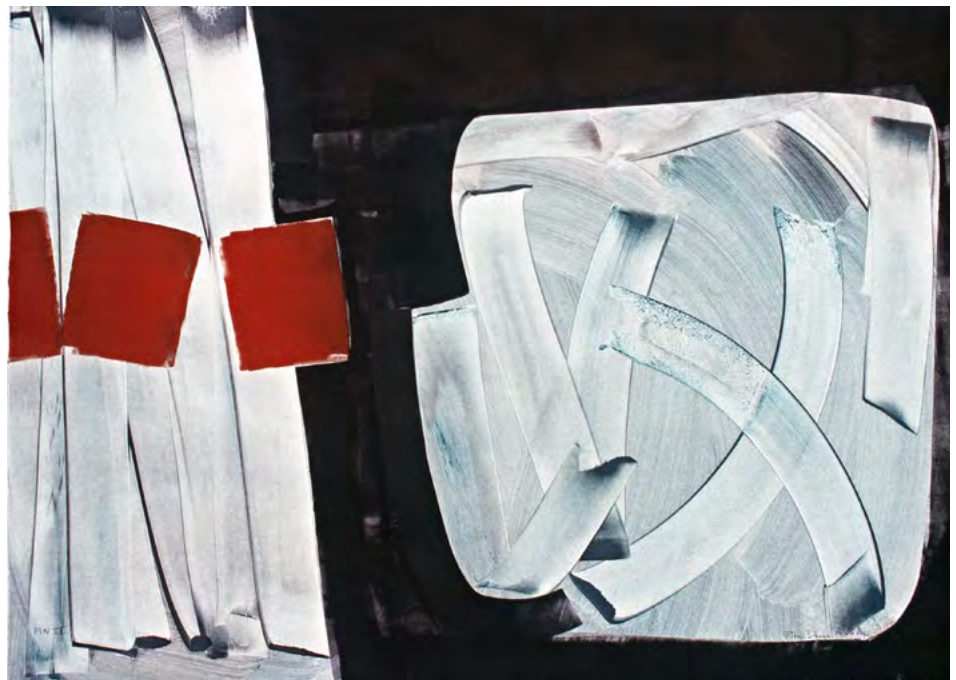
Below: Montenegro Series: Monoprint VI

whelmed and thrilled at the same time, but I left transformed by Rita's spirit and art. It was pure creative magic!"

Rita Deanin Abbey Museum
5850 N. Park Street
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To arrange a visit call
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THE MANY SIDES OF MARIO BARTH

SIN CITY'S RESIDENT ROCK STAR / TATTOO ARTIST /
ENTREPRENEUR / HUMANITARIAN IS A WORLDWIDE POWERHOUSE

Article and Photography by Sam Novak

It's often said that you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. Take one glance at Mario Barth, and you might assume he's a real "bad boy." Well, he is, but not in the way you might think. With his wild mane, beefy arms, multiple tattoos, and biker-chic wardrobe, the Austrian native presents an imposing figure. Nevertheless, you'll soon realize that Mario Barth has more layers than a Vidalia onion. And he's probably even sweeter.

I first met Mario Barth at a lunch meeting to discuss this article. He and his close friend, producer Norbert Aleman (CRAZY GIRLS), were already seated when I arrived. Mario stood up and shook my hand with an imposing grip... and the aura of his presence was palpable.

Sometimes you can feel the power of a person's influence just by

standing near them. If you happen to meet Barth in person or attend one of his concerts, you'll understand why he's a worldwide sensation.

To many, Barth is known as the "Tattoo Artist to the Stars." His distinctive, boldly-colored style has attracted some of the planet's best-known entertainers and athletes. Superstars like Sylvester Stallone, Pamela Anderson, Tommy Lee, Paris Hilton, Drake, Usher, and Lenny Kravitz adorned their skin with his ink. In that way alone, Mario's artistry has been seen by millions across the globe.

The tale of Mario Barth plays much like a superhero origin story. Body art was rare during his youth, mostly relegated to war veterans. Tattoo shops weren't even permitted in Graz, Barth's birthplace and Austria's capital. That made his fa-

ther's military ink all the more fascinating.

Eager to experiment, Mario created his first piece of permanent body art at the age of twelve. The tattoo was of a skull, and his "canvas" was the back of a young playmate's hand. As you might imagine, the reaction was less "Spiderman" and more "Green Goblin." It would be another five years before Mario returned to the inkwell.

Driven by a desire to bring his talents into the mainstream, Barth would champion the movement to change laws and make tattoo shops both legal and regulated. Spurred by the reaction to his first attempt, the young entrepreneur reasoned that people would be less inclined to take dangerous risks if safety and comfort were readily available. His efforts be-



came a true movement, and what began in the seventies has exploded into a worldwide empire.

After successfully opening the first legal tattoo parlor in Graz, the ambitious tattooist came to the States. His art and operation became solidly established in the 1990s in South Beach, Miami, spreading outward to the nation's four corners. The first "Starlight Tattoo" was opened there and became a go-to destination. Along the way, an insistence on solid business practices allowed Mario to help legalize the procedure across the States and set new standards for an industry previously dismissed as "underground" and "rebellious."

The next big step was the regulation of ink production. Once again, Mario set the standards. He created INTENZE, the world leader in tattoo inks and supplies.

INTENZE professional-grade products are sterilized, FDA approved, and have never been tested on animals. They are vegan, ethically sourced, and non-chemical. INTENZE inks are manufactured in an ISO-certified facility and undergo rigorous, constant quality control. The result is pigments recognized as the safest in the industry.

After conquering much of Europe and the States, Mario and company set sights on Las Vegas, aka "America's playground." They realized that Sin City lends itself to impulsive, life-altering decisions like quickie-marriages...and badly-done tattoos. What better way to spread its mission statement than making body art available inside major casinos?

It took two years convincing MGM Resorts corporate suits to give the concept a shot. "Starlight Tattoo

Mandalay Bay" opened in February 2008 and was an instant hit. The iconic and easily-recognizable establishment is located next to House of Blues...a brilliant blending of contemporary artistry and a targeted lifestyle demographic.

One wild success begets another, and soon Mirage Hotel Casino was home to "King Ink," a hybrid lounge / bar / tattoo parlor that eventually transformed into a second Vegas "Starlight Tattoo" within the same resort. Starlight had previously developed a relationship with Mirage thanks to their annual "Biggest Tattoo Show on Earth. "

Despite a decade of success, "Starlight Tattoo Mirage" fell victim to the pandemic and closed in May 2020. But not even COVID-19 can stop the "King of Ink." Barth told CHIC COMPASS that the time might be right for another music /



body-art partnership once Mirage transforms into Hard Rock Hotel.

Starlight Tattoo remains an integral part of Mandalay Bay's pulse and vibe. Guests arriving by MGM's network of trams encounter the body-art parlor before anything else, setting a tone that extends throughout the massive resort. Multiple entrances draw potential customers from both the casino floor and from within House of Blues.

A stroll through the shop is as much an educational experience as a working studio. Memorabilia from decades of Mario's professional and humanitarian efforts line the walls, vying for attention alongside meticulously-kept presentations of

the INTENZE brand. Visitors are welcome to observe tattooists in action from either the parlor floor or the "fishbowl," a casino-side viewing area.

Despite winning over 200 international awards for his enterprises and artistry, Barth felt he had much more to accomplish. His commitment to "doing the right thing" spread into charitable efforts. He lent his voice to such organizations as PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), breast cancer fundraisers, international relations, business education, safety practices, and recognition of military veterans.

INTENZE eventually moved its

world headquarters to Las Vegas, becoming much more than a factory and distribution center. As Mario's home base, it has expanded into labs, testing facilities, marketing offices, an exhibit of his artwork, and a storage bunker for some extremely prized automobiles. If you're fortunate enough to get the full tour (as CHIC COMPASS did), you'll discover a massive rehearsal and music recording facility.

Throughout my conversations with the facility's various technicians, artists, and experts, it became clear that the INTENZE team is filled with enthusiastic supporters. Each expressed their admiration for the man in charge, describing





his hands-on approach in every step of production. “Nothing happens here without Mario’s personal involvement,” one said.

Another recounted his commitment to cruelty-free, totally pure products. “He won’t even allow our items to be affiliated with vendors that permit animal testing of any kind. That’s just the kind of guy he is”.

Sylvester Stallone’s big screen adventure *THE EXPENDABLES* features a slightly-fictionalized version of Mario Barth, played by Oscar nominee Mickey Rourke. Perhaps it was his close relationship with entertainment superstars that launched the next dramatic chapter in the Mario Barth saga.

In 2017, Barth formed ABOUT KINGS, an Austrian-based country rock band with roots in Detroit, Nashville, Croatia, and, of course, Las Vegas. Similar to that humble tattooing start in Austria, ABOUT KINGS rapidly spread throughout Europe, bolstered by the success of their German-language album “Guardian Angel.” Small concerts gave way to crowds exceeding eighty-thousand. And so, ABOUT KINGS headed to Nashville to record the English-language “Go Big or Go Home.”

As with every Mario Barth project, ABOUT KINGS delivers hard-rocking results with a side of “giving.” Last year the band made its Vegas debut at Mosaic Theater, joining country stars Tyler Rich

and LONESTAR. The showcase provided 200 free tickets to VITALY, a local blood-donation service.

This summer, the band launched an international tour from Vegas at Hark Rock Live, providing free admission and cocktails to veterans and active military members. From there, it was off to Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and of course, Austria, with thousands packing into massive arenas for every performance.

Now that he’s back home, Barth can focus on another passion project – The Coalition for Tattoo Safety. This non-profit organization ensures that the industry has unlimited access to education, training, artist-vendor networking, and methods to protect the health and safety of tattoo artists.

And just like the young man who changed the laws in his homeland, Barth’s Coalition will continue to be an industry watchdog, lobbying for fair legislation and a distinct separation between the medical aspects of tattooing and basic cosmetology.

Next summer, Planet Hollywood Hotel Casino will be home to the annual “World Tattoo and Piercing Trade Show.” One of its sponsors is DRINK’D, the only tattooed-lifestyle bar on the Strip. While there, you might spot owner Mario Barth chatting with pal Criss Angel over some beers in the corner. As cool as that may seem, it’s just another day for the “King of Ink.”



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HANDCRAFTED WALLCOVERING

ALLITERATION: LIVING THE LAS VEGAS LIFE

By Brian G. Thornton



Above: Nagel is an award-winning Realtor with Las Vegas Sotheby's International Realty. Due to her global experiences, she can literally sell you a home internationally. Photo by Charles Henry

Alliteration for an apprentice linguist is a tongue twister's tournament. As I sat down with local lifestyle lover Claire Nagel, clarity and clues abounded regarding her lifelong leaps. I had known about her through mutual design professionals, but this assignment allowed me to take a longer look at the lady. At 57, this tall active redhead captures your attention no matter where she arrives. A native Brit, Claire is the person everyone wants to know or asks, "Who's that?" As we take a few longitudinal and latitudinal leaps, you may want to pop a bottle of your favorite bubbly or, better still, put the kettle on and read along. I was so fascinated with her ease of conversation that interviewing her for a story was impromptu. There has been a lot of living and loving, so let's begin with location.

LONDON LIFE

Claire's story begins in Romford, East London, in the mid-60s. Romford is a part of Greater London. Today, it is one of the largest commercial, retail, entertainment, and leisure districts in London and has a well-developed night-time economy.

What a vibrant time to grow up in the UK. Digital newsletter historyhit.com describes it as a "decade of change in Britain. Shifts in law, politics, and media reflected a new individualism and growing appetite to live in a more liberal 'permissive society.' People began to stand up for their rights, both civil and at work, and express themselves in new ways."

It was no wonder she worked retail in the beginning. Nagel responded, "My first job was a management training course at a department store called Debenhams, and I also bartended to make extra money." At some point, many creatives discovered that 'extra special gift.' In her case, she had an interest in people and personalities. That naturally led to nightlife management in hospitality, design, and luxury. "I knew early on I was a people person and began work in the cashier's office for a department store as my first job following school. It was doing accounting in a room with four walls and three other people. I had to get out ... it was the most boring job I ever had."

"I worked for Peter Stringfellow at the Hippodrome Nightclub in Leicester Square, a celebrity hot spot and live music venue," Nagel recalls. "I loved the interaction with so many people; no two days/nights were the same."

For the unsuspecting, Stringfellow was creating his world-class celebrity-laden venues in London. Around that same time, Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager were likewise earning global reputations with their Studio 54 in New York. Nagel would later go on to work with Ian Schrager in LA.

"I also worked at The Village Bars and ran a regular night at the Limelight, a chain of significant

and infamous discotheques with a sister club in NY. So much fun! After work, we would go dancing at Trade, Ministry of Sound, and Heaven, to name a few. I worked hard and played hard; it was a great time to be in London. I worked in nightclubs and bars in London from 1985 to 1993. It was an amazing time in my life." Even with all the activity in London, she was ready for something more. The move to America in 1996 was inevitable by way of three years in Spain. "Though Spain is still my retirement plan. I love it so much. It is laid back and easy going with great food and music."



Love it or leave it, Las Vegas can be a playground or a polarizing place, "I love it and even appreciated my own country's history much more after living in America." Photo by Charles Henry



THE LONG LEAP

Claire Nagel lived in several countries and states before landing in Las Vegas. "So, I have been coming to America for holidays, etc., for a long time before I decided to move. My mother lived in Germany, Utah, Texas, Louisiana, and Southern California." Later, as her stepfather fell ill, Claire chose to leave the east coast and go to LA to be nearer to her mum. Following his passing, her mother retired to Las Vegas, and that was when Claire relocated to Nevada in 2005.

"So that's how I ended up here. I have always been a traveler, from early on in Europe to visiting Mum in the USA. My stepfather being sick was just another reason for me

to be closer to my mum after so many years living across the world from each other." After Miami and New York, Nagel made it to the west coast. "I loved working with Ian Schrager: he was just such a hotel visionary, and working at The Mondrian in LA, we got to host the Emmys, Grammys, Oscars, and Entertainment Tonight after parties, and they were star-studded events. It was amazing to be up close and personal with so many celebrities."

She further offered, "I was actually star struck a couple of times from helping Mickey Rooney and his wife into the hotel for a charity event, to showing Stevie Wonder and his wife to their table in the restaurant to helping Paris Hilton get away from the paparazzi outside through the employee exit under

Above: It's people like Claire that unabashedly drop in from global travel and make us appreciate even more just how very special a place we call home can be. Photo by Charles Henry

the hotel. It was a blast working there and also very demanding - these people expected the best in service and experience. You learned to be very organized and on your A-game at all times."

LAS VEGAS LIFESTYLE LODGING LOYALTY LUXURY

Love it or leave it, Las Vegas can be a playground or a polarizing place. With her life experiences

steeped in European nightlife and hospitality, it was inevitable that Nagel would find a happy place in Nevada.

"I really loved to be able to turn an upset customer into a loyal customer, and that was what started me enjoying dealing with challenging guests. The people that had something bad happen during the stay—we messed up the reservation, the room type was not available, they did not like their view, or they were checked into a dirty room. The recovery was

so important, how we dealt with fixing the mistake and changed a bad stay into an amazing one; 'recovery guests' were the ones who became the best loyal customers, and some followed me from hotel to hotel just proving that service is more important to people than we realize."

"I love it and even appreciated my own country's history much more after living in America. I adored the queen and remember as a child my grandparents taking me on the tube to St James Park to

feed the ducks and sitting on the side of the street for hours (with sandwiches and a flask of tea) just to wait for a glimpse of the queen or other members of the royal family to go past in their coaches. I would wave my flag and feel so excited to have seen her. It was so much fun."

LINKING LEGACIES

Claire is an award-winning Realtor with Las Vegas Sotheby's International Realty. Due to her global experiences, she can literally sell you a home internationally. When asked how she knew luxury real estate was her calling, she began: "In 2015, my mum passed when I hit 50 years old, and I wanted a better work-life balance. I did not know what that looked like at the time, but I knew it would no longer be in hotels. I quit my job that I loved at the Cosmopolitan without having a job to go to."

Nagel knew it was time to leg it and needed further excitement. "Some jobs I just outgrew. When you're not learning anymore, some jobs become mundane, and that's another reason to move on. I always want to love going to work and be evolving, growing, learning."

"I took three months off and traveled to Bali, India, and London



Left: On summer holiday, Claire strolls along London's renowned Regent Street amidst the commemorative flags for Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee Year.

before deciding to get my real estate license. My broker Tom (who is still my broker), said, 'Why don't you get your real estate license until you figure out what's next for you?' So, I did, and I have no regrets and am so glad I have found another career that I love."

Her background in hospitality saw a significant crossover from making that leap into selling high-end real estate. Claire Nagel was recently named in Sotheby's Top 25 Agents in the first two quarters of 2022 for her efforts. "Instead of making sure a guest has the best stay and returns, I handhold clients through the biggest purchase/sale of their lives, and I have learned that people fear the unknown, so for new or first home buyers, I educate them about the whole process prior to ever looking at homes. I show them every paper they will sign and share timelines, so they know exactly what to expect. No surprises, but of course, as in life, things can always go wrong. As in hospitality, it's how you handle it. Always be positive and calm, and don't show stress because if you act stressed, the clients will be too."

BONNE VIVANTE

"I love what I do, and I love Vegas. I'm really happy here, but yes, there will be something next, and when that time comes, I will embrace it." We spoke about off time from real estate: travel, yoga, food, and dining. "Some of my favorite spots to eat are (best-kept secrets) La Strega, Harlo Steakhouse & Bar, DW Bistro, Anima by Edo,



Vintner's Grill, Locale, an Italian restaurant in Enterprise. Finally, I plan to retire to Spain to be closer to the family."

Alliteration may have been a convenient trope telling this story about our *bonne Vivante*. Her story is about LOCATION, LONDON, LIBATIONS, LEAPS, AND LIFESTYLE. Ultimately, it's about LOYALTY, LEARNING, LOVING, LIVING, LUXURY, and LAS VEGAS.

Claire enjoys the good things in life. Always seemingly upbeat and an ambassador for our desert Sin City, she is one of a kind. Completing the circle, she has generously volunteered for local entities like Las Vegas Rescue Mission and

Above: Nagel in the historic Alfama District in Lisbon, Portugal.

Opportunity Village by supporting their local events. Often, we live in our collective bubbles—even more so now following the global pandemic—and we tend to isolate and insulate. It's not only the legacy locals that know this town, but its people like Claire who unabashedly drop in from global travel and make us appreciate even more just how extraordinary a place we call home. Whether you're passing through for a weekend, a month, or a few years, there is much to learn from this trans-Atlantic transplant.

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DESIGNER: MY CLUB
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER

WEST COAST MEETS EAST COAST

Article by Joan S. Peck
Photography by Mark Gunter

Los Angeles Swim Week meets Miami Swim Week in breathtaking displays of “nothing like anyone has seen before” swimsuit and beach attire fashion shows powered by Art Hearts Fashion.

Los Angeles’ Alexis Bong and My Club demonstrate what glamorous beachwear looks like, leaving you desiring to be one of the lucky ones to have one of these fabulous feminine designs for your own.

Miami’s designers, Asherah, Giannina Azar, Keva J, and Lumija, display daring, sexy, colorful, artistic, and earthy designs for swimming and beachwear. There’s no question you can find beautiful fashion for the beach from coast to coast ... if you dare.



LOS ANGELES SWIM WEEK

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ART HEARTS FASHION

DESIGNER: ALEXIS BONG
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



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DESIGNER: LUMIJA SWIMWEAR
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DESIGNER: KEEP IT FITNESS
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



MIAMI SWIM WEEK

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PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER

Keva



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**POWERED BY
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DESIGNER: KEVA J
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



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Death on the Strip

Thirty-two-year-old Rosalie Bennett lives in Las Vegas and uses her psychic ability and tarot cards to predict her clients' future. But when the death card shows up and murders follow, she must use her talents in a whole new way and becomes embroiled in cases to either save people or solve murders. Things aren't as simple as they appear, causing Rosie to take things into her own hands to save the day. Her silky dog, Sweet Pea, is her sidekick, and her

grandmother's spirit still pops into her life with advice or simple expressions of love --- sometimes at the most ill-timed moments.

Death at the Lake

When the Death Card continues to pop up in her tarot card readings and murders follow, Rosie deals with a crazed person trying to kill her. Will she survive?

Death Returns

After Rosie brings down the person responsible for her fiancé's death, she falls into a slump. A telephone call changes everything. What will she do?

Death in the Shadows

Danger lurks everywhere, and trouble unfolds. Rosie and Isabella join their psychic forces to bring Tiffany back from the SHADOWS. Can they find her before it is too late?

Death on the Run

Mike tells Rosie he isn't ready to further their love relationship—where does that leave Rosie? Isn't separation supposed to make the heart grow fonder? Life throws a curveball and catches Rosie unprepared for what takes place. What will she do?

Death Comes Calling

As time passes, Rosie finds herself to be "a woman of a certain age" ... and bored. Reviewing her life, Rosie misses her younger years when she worked with the police to solve cases. So, when Police Chief Roberto calls Rosie to help find a runaway girl, she jumps at the chance. Can Rosie save her granddaughter?

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KELLEY POLING

A RISING TALENT

By Bridgetta Tomarchio
Photography by Isabelle Ruen



Cleveland, Ohio-born Kelley Poling has transitioned from being one of the top bathing suit and athletic models of the late 90s to work as an actress in film and television today. As a model, Kelley worked on campaigns with Hawaiian Tropic, Nike, Yamaha, and Harley Davidson. For a year between her modeling and acting career, she was on tour with Madonna.

Having grown up in a military family, she is also a marksman with handguns, rifles, and archery. Kelley is also trained in automatic weapons and martial arts techniques specific to film and television.

When not filming, she travels the world as a competitive Classical Fencer and is proficient with foil, small-sword, dueling sword, rapier, and saber. Poling has been training for more than 20 years in New York with Maestri Jeannette Acosta Martinez and Ray Martinez of the prestigious Martinez Academy of Arms.

For fun, Kelly surfs, runs 5k races, and performs Celtic/Scottish music.

BT: We'd love to learn more about your backstory on how you got into the entertainment industry.

At Left: Kelley Poling wears a dress by Hermès

KP: I did my first community play when I was eight years old and realized I love to make an audience laugh. The rest of my school days were spent in athletics and studying, but those work ethics set me up to be competitive in the entertainment field later. Because I was in such great shape as an athlete, it was easy to be a model for bathing suits and athletic wear. I also have always had a great love of adventure and daring athletics, so I made the perfect model for surfing, jet skis, mountain bikes, running, etc. I wasn't afraid to break a nail or get dirty, which made everything much more fun. Then an accident put me in the hospital for a while and sent me on my way to the corporate world for years, but I never gave up the adventure and athletics; I just stayed out of the spotlight for a while. Now, I'm baaaack!

BT: In your younger years, you modeled for Hawaiian Tropic, Nike, Yamaha, and Harley Davidson, to name a few. What campaign was your favorite and why?

KP: Hawaiian Tropic. Look it up. You will see why. It checked all the boxes. Fun, adventure, friendships, celebrities, athletics, world travel, everything a 20-something girl like me could ask for.

BT: How did you get to be on tour with Madonna, and what was that like? Can you tell us a few stories?

KP: Most of the hard work of getting a job in the entertainment industry is who knows you and do they like you. I met the camera crew hired by Madonna in Big Bear, California, doing a roast for Chris Col-

linworth. I was joking around with John Wayne's son, Patrick, for a skit we were working on to be filmed at the top of the mountain. I was in my bikini and in probably one of the first pairs of Uggs ever made standing in the snow - freezing. The camera guys were trying to help out because they saw me trying to stay warm while we were figuring it out. Some of the best friendships start in times like that. It was those guys that

got me hired on tour with Madonna. I was hired as the Chef's assistant and ended up as a stage model for one song! We had so much fun. I still have my denim band jacket.

BT: How did you get into martial arts and weaponry?

KP: I grew up with a military father. I love my whole family (really), but I'm definitely a Daddy's girl. He had me



Above: Kelley wears a Large Vortex Pendant by JimEye Designs

make my own ammunition, shoot my own gun, taught me archery, gave me my first sword, and taught me everything about handling weapons safely and smartly. I never lost interest in training in them. Swords are definitely my favorite, however. I also added my own training in Fencing and a few Eastern martial arts as the years passed. Martial arts have been my world since I was a little girl.

BT: Wow, that's amazing! What specifically intrigued you about Fencing? Tell us what it's like to train and become a competitive Classical Fencer.

KP: I have had a sword in my hand since I was a child. I just didn't know how to use them well. When I became independent in the business world and had enough money to seek out what I considered the best people to train me in the swords I loved, I found the Martinez Academy of Arms in New York City. Maestro Ramon Martinez and his wife, Maestro Jeannette Acosta-Martinez, are living legends in the sword world. The depth of knowledge it takes to become a good fencer and the years of training are astounding! What a challenge! It's hard, so I love it.

BT: You've been a stuntwoman on various shows (*Outlander*, etc.); what is that like being a female stunt person in a male-dominated field? Do you feel you need to train harder?

KP: Yes! First, stunt people do NOT get the recognition they deserve in the first place, no matter what gender they identify with. Second, you



Above: Kelley wears a custom handmade fencing jacket by Sarah Lassalle of Lassalle Designs, fencing pants by Triplette Fencing, shoes by Doc Martens, and holds a smallsword by Cult of Athena

have to command respect by doing a really good job at what you are there to do. You have to be a safe partner, know what you are doing, and have the experience to do it well. Then you have to do it extra, extra well because you are seen as the physically weaker sex.

I train weapons and choreography with a Hollywood Legend, Anthony De Longis. He is an actor, whip master, swordmaster, and weapons expert at De Longis Performance and Combative Arts. He's also a Member of the Black Belt Hall of Fame, USA Martial Arts Hall of Fame, International Knife Throwers

Hall of Fame, and Ultimate Warriors Hall of Fame- so I think I'm in good hands.

Also, I love period pieces. There were not too many women wielding swords back in the day - some, but it wasn't common. Sometimes I had to dress like a man. I'm glad Hollywood is changing to become more inclusive all the way around.

BT: Do you have any advice for women in male-dominated fields?

KP: Yes. Put blinders on and just do your thing. Don't look back, don't look to the side, just move forward. Do really good work, and it will speak for itself. Also, get on the boards and change a few policies.

You're smart. You can do it.

BT: How do you feel about actors doing their own stunts? Do you think it's safe, or should every actor have a well-trained stunt double?

KP: I love to see actors doing some of their own stunts. I think all actors should have a little stunt training. HOWEVER, there are some stunts that take a lifetime to train for. Do not do those stunts. Leave those stunts to the professionals.

BT: What is your training schedule like? Do you still compete?

KP: I train several times a week with swords and every day with moving martial arts like tai chi, wing chun, or

weapon-based Filipino martial arts. I still compete in Classical Fencing. In fact, we have the Grand Assault coming up in November in New York. I'm training for that now. Right after that, in May, we are going to a castle about an hour outside of Paris to train for two weeks with various swords in the French School of Fencing.

BT: Have you always wanted to be an actress? How did your career transition?

KP: I didn't know I wanted to be an actress until I was an actress. I actually wanted to be a doctor, astronaut, and ballerina. I studied for a long time for those three things while doing all this martial and entertaining stuff. I can't remember if I woke up one morning and just said, "What am I doing? I have to just be who I am!" I still love to study the solar system, medical anything still intrigues me, and I found the grace of the ballerina in Classical Fencing.

BT: Do you find it more challenging to start an acting career in your forties, or is it easier now that there are more roles for women, especially the availability for older parts?

KP: Yes. In the recent past, a woman in her 40s was done in Hollywood. No one wanted to represent you because your career was over! It's still not easy, but I am happy to see more older actresses on screen now than ever before.

Also, It's different to start your career later in life than in your 20s. I started my career seriously in my late teens and early 20s. The roles offered and how to get them were much



Above: Kelley wears a bathing suit by Sociala, boots by Chic, and a necklace by Pamela Love

different back then. It was easier to get an agent and be considered for lead roles. You had your whole career and many money-making opportunities in front of you.

You also had to contend with a few things that started the #metoo movement in Hollywood, which weren't very pleasant to deal with when you're a hot young thing in Hollywood. I'm lucky I never fell into those situations myself. I have no stories, thank goodness. When I returned to the industry, I had solid business knowledge, marketing skills, a lifetime of stunt training and real-world experience, and, luckily, a little physicality. I don't have to contend with some of the negative situations of young Hollywood because I'm not young anymore. I'm older, wiser, more experienced, and quite a good businesswoman. I can play that up-and-coming 20s actor's Mom like no other! I also make a killer trophy wife and secret agent/special op character.

BT: Do you find yourself stereotyped into the same types of roles? What are some ways to work through any stereotypes?

KP: In the beginning, yes. When you are hired, sometimes they just need to check a few boxes and make sure you can act. As the industry is getting to know me, I am finding roles that better suit me and can sink myself into. I love roles where I can use my stunt training, play my fiddle, or use an accent I have perfected. It's such a big industry with many talented people. It takes time for people to realize your talents.

BT: If you could go back in time and change anything in your career, what would it be and why?

KP: I would have moved to Los Angeles a long time ago. I think you need a really good support system in this industry, and it takes a while to build it. I make friends easily, but —good friends are like sword training ... it takes a long time for it to become part of who you are. When I book a job, it's always cross-country calls to let my dearest-to-heart friends and family know.

BT: What advice do you give to middle-aged women who have a dream of changing careers?

KP: GO FOR IT! This isn't a dress rehearsal. Don't give up your responsibilities and throw caution to the wind; be brave enough to have faith in yourself and try it. The first step is the hardest.

BT: Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give others trying to break into the entertainment industry?

KP: Ask yourself why you want to be an actor. Make a good reason. Study business and marketing, align yourself with the best teachers and coaches, and never stop training. You will get there. Never forget your "why."

BT: You also play music! How did you get into playing Celtic and Scottish music? Did you become intrigued by your Irish heritage?

KP: I have a musical family. My mother is a country singer; my grandmother was a fantastic pia-

nist (she could play ragtime better than anyone I have ever met), and my sister is a phenomenal singer. Now my niece is a fantastic singer and pianist. I'm ok. I love traditional and folk music because it's usually played for people at parties for dancing and socializing. My family plays together on the holidays, and I had to play something! I do love playing my fiddle, no matter what the genre. Celtic is my heritage and my love, however.

BT: Let's talk about self-care: mind, body, and spirit. On days that you have a busy schedule, how do you stay focused and grounded? Do you have a daily regimen?

KP: I always do something physical. On really hectic days, I like to go for a run to work it all out in my head and get in a good sweat. I also make calls to friends and family on a regular basis. Nothing brings you back like conversations with people that you love. I take a bath every night and make sure to spend a lot of time with my dog. He takes me out of myself because he's spoiled and needs a lot of love and attention...and snacks.

BT: How do you keep balanced in your life and career? What advice could you offer others for peace of mind and balance in their lives?

KP: Don't take work life too seriously. Make time for love. If you knew you would die soon, what would you do differently? I died and came back once already. I haven't seen the world the same since. I try to live my life to the fullest, but that doesn't always mean work and money.

BT: You look absolutely incredible. PLEASE let us in on your beauty secrets! What products are a MUST have? What is your daily/nightly skincare ritual?

KP: Thank you! I have never smoked or done a drug recreationally. I am active every day, and I sweat a lot. I take vitamins and try to eat healthy. I think those things are the best things to do for youthfulness. However, I also make sure I get all of my makeup off at night. I use ivory soap and an exfoliating makeup remover cloth. Then I use a serum by SkinMedica that I love called TNS serum, and depending on the season, a moisturizer and eye cream with Hyaluronic acid.

Right now, I'm really into a brand called Fillerina. I change my routine depending on the season, the location of the world I am in, and what fits in my carry-on without exploding. If I'm training hard somewhere, I try not to clog my pores and opt for a simple sunblock and lip balm.

BT: You did this amazing photoshoot in Las Vegas. What was your regimen to get ready for this shoot? Do you find it different to get ready for photoshoots now than when you were younger/ What was so different from then to now?

KP: I love to get ready for big photo shoots now! When I was younger, I hated it. I was such a tomboy. It was a good day if you saw me with waterproof mascara on my lashes. Now, I find it like making art. I want to paint a pretty picture. I try to drink lots of water. I make sure my hair is clean, make sure the clothes fit correctly, and everything



Above: Kelley wears a dress by Hervé Leger, and eyewear by Dynamikos

is properly functioning. I gather my accessories, dust off my shoes (even if I don't wear any for the shoot), and put eye gel patches on to ward off any unnecessary wrinkles. Getting plenty of sleep and having a good support crew are also key to beauty.

The day I was shooting, it was windy and cold. I also had to change my

clothes in the open or in a cold car. It was helpful to have someone there with a big warm blanket to keep me warm or shield me from the onlookers. Also, I had the most INCREDIBLE photographer, Isabelle Ruen. She was the key to everything in that shoot. She could make anyone look stunning.

BT: Who are some of your favorite



“Don’t take work
life too seriously.
Make time for love.
If you knew you
were going to die
soon, what would
you do differently?”

- Kelley Poling

designers to wear? Who would you LOVE to wear?

KP: I love vintage clothes from the 90s! I love vintage Alexander McQueen, Jean Paul Gaultier, Yves Saint Laurent, Azzedine Alaïa, John Galliano, and Versace. Such drama! Such a time to be a fashion model! It's tougher for me to choose a more modern designer these days. So many good ones! I have been wearing a lot of Monse lately. I love the fabric and angles.

BT: Where are your favorite places to dine in Las Vegas? Favorite shows that you recommend to others?

KP: I love a good restaurant like Joel Robuchon or Le Cirque before heading out to a Cirque Du Soleil show or a good concert like Van Morrison or Metallica. Such a good lineup for 2022.

BT: Let's talk about playing opposite two Oscar-winning actors, Rebecca DeMornay and Kevin Spacey, in *Peter Five Eight*. What did you do when you found out you booked Jen in this film? Who did you call first?

KP: I couldn't believe it! How did I get in the same movie as a supporting actor with a two-time Oscar-winning actor and an actress when I had been studying for another role!! I always call my Mom and Dad first. Always. Then my nieces.

BT: Were you nervous at the table read? What was it like filming on set with two seasoned actors?

KP: You get to see the brilliance in action. A lot starts to change in you.

You suddenly realize what it is like to be working with people with acting ability at the highest level. Suddenly, it seems like their ability can seep into you a little for the time you are with them in the scene. They have the power to do that. To bring out a better actor in you. Then, when the director says cut, they are charming, funny, and real. I want more of that. BT: This is a career-high for you. What's next? What are all your upcoming projects?

KP: I am beginning to film another feature film next month. In this one, I am very much a serious person with a point to prove. It's very different than the role I just played.

Ongoing, I have different roles on a kid's YouTube channel called "*Totally Studios*." I usually play the bad guy that the kids love to hate. I can't believe how many children get their entertainment from YouTube! I love that we have become an amazing filming family over at the studios in Burbank.

I'm also booked in a recurring guest star role on a major streaming TV channel. This role will be fun for me. I believe it's a small part of my personality already. I can't wait to see what I am wearing!

BT: What are some career goals for you? Who would you love to work opposite of?

KP: This may sound funny, but I would love to be on the Hallmark channel with Candace Cameron-Bure so my Mom and her girlfriends can watch me. They watch that channel all day long. They know all the characters in every movie.

I would also like to be in a western with Sam Sheppard or Robert Redford next. That way, my Dad could see me. I could also use some of my weapon skills (safely) on that set.

Then I will be complete. Maybe even on to a 3rd career. Right?!

BT: LOL, I love that! We all wish you the utmost success and cannot wait to see you more! We will all be following you!

For more on Kelley Poling, check out her website, kelleypoling.com.

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kelleypoling.com
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Photographer: Isabelle Ruen
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SIENA ITALIAN AUTHENTIC TRATTORIA AND DELI

A Multitude of Experiences to Enjoy

By Elaine & Scott Harris

Sienna Italian Authentic Trattoria and Deli in Summerlin, Las Vegas, has its roots in 1978 when it operated in a small space near UNLV. It has since moved to affluent Summerlin in 2008. Over the years, they have expanded to a spacious 12,000-square-foot contemporary restaurant, Deli, bakery, lounge, and marketplace under one roof.

What keeps motivating this bustling restaurant with a dedicated

chef-owner and personal staff to have an average of 10,000 covers per quarter?

According to Executive Chef Partner Giancarlo Bomparola, "it is the ability to intuitively and genuinely know the needs of your venue and your staff after decades in the business. Being aware that one must keep growing and training the staff to meet the ever-changing demands of the public and the current world situation while being

a teacher, mentor, and good businessperson."

"In one word – Passion; something strongly inside you that motivates you through the long hours and in the beginning usually low pay and working holidays, weekends and evenings," said Chef Giancarlo. "Nothing is as rewarding as seeing someone forever changed for the better by tasting your cuisine. We have guests that come to our restaurant 3 or 4 times a week. Some are at the door every morning at the Deli waiting for a fresh loaf of bread and other fresh homemade pastries."

The Deli is a dedicated Italian deli, bakery, and marketplace that has served the Las Vegas community for over 40 years. Wander the aisles amongst a variety of Italian specialties, imported cheeses and meats, dry pasta, pasta sauce, freshly baked bread, gelato, and homemade desserts, or indulge in a fresh sandwich to go or dine in their European café with a glass of wine.

At the Trattoria, please sit at the large bar, relax in their plush lounge chairs, order a cocktail, and enjoy



live entertainment. Happy hour is where most signature libations are 40% off, and signature bites are served Monday through Saturday from 3 PM to 7 PM and Sunday from 3 PM to Closing. Stop in for the Reverse Happy Hour Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 9 PM to Closing for those who are out later. Grab an Antipasto Italiano with Assorted Italian Cheeses, Cured Meats, and Marinated Vegetables, or even a Cannelloni stuffed with Veal, Pork and Beef served with Cream Sauce and Topped with Meat Sauce or a fresh Salmon and Crab Meat Cake with Homemade Romano Breadcrumbs served with Aioli Sauce.

The Trattoria menu offers many choices made from scratch daily in the kitchen led by Milan-raised Executive Chef Partner Giancarlo Bomparola. He embodies the spirit of northern Italian cooking with dishes created and passed down through generations of his family. Bomparola started at the ripe age of 11 when he helped his brothers in their restaurant in Milan.

"I grew up in the business. My brothers had me working in their restaurants at an early age to keep me off the streets. I did everything from cleaning tables and peeling shrimp," he said with a smile. Years later, he landed in France, where he had to learn French very quickly and ascended to positions both in front and back of the house.

Bomparola joined us at our table as we waited eagerly to see what our Italian culinary artistry would be. "I have staff here that I have



worked with for over 14 years. Many of my co-workers started in humble positions to becoming chefs or management in the front of the house,” he said with pride. “There are so many aspects of those who aspire to be a chef. Some like to be into the numbers; others love being on the line and doing creative work. It is important to know where people’s strengths are to keep them motivated and growing.”

With a multitude of delectable seasonal dishes and specialties to choose from, the dining experience was guaranteed to be superb. We began with the Carpaccio Di Bue,



Carpaccio Di Bue



a generous raw, thin-sliced Tenderloin intermingled with the bright assertiveness of spicy Dijon mustard and shaved parmesan cheese. Our appetites were appeased harmoniously with a pairing of the house Pinot Grigio.

Bomparola arrived at our table with a wonderful, fresh Tagliolini ai Frutti di Mare. This house specialty of homemade pasta tossed with shrimp, lobster meat, scallops, tomatoes, and scallions in a light lemony seafood cream sauce – a house specialty. We can see why! This incredible Chef was not done yet by any means. A cart arrived with a perfectly prepared European Imported Branzino (Bass) pan seared and finished in the oven. It was served with a tangy lemon caper sauce, roasted potatoes, and sautéed spinach. For the grand FINI, perhaps the best-grilled octopus we have ever had (and that is saying a great deal!) It was tender



Grilled Octopus

and a melt-in-your-mouth marvel with a hint of smokey char from the wood-burning oven. The Fini was the classic light but velvety tiramisu paired with a creamy homemade limoncello that couples an alchemic blend of tart and sweet.

With the success of Siena Italian Authentic Trattoria and Deli, there are plans to open another location with an entirely different focus. Opening soon will be a café, bar, and grill that is more casual, attracting a younger crowd. Stay tuned for more on this one.

Siena Italian Authentic Trattoria and Deli is convivial, which features indoor and outdoor dining areas, a private dining room for special events, a bar lounge with live entertainment, an Italian deli, and a bakery that makes fresh bread and pasta daily, as well as take-home wine and spirits! No matter what mood you are in or what time of day, you can expect an enjoyable experience with exceptional cuisine and service every time.

Siena Italian Authentic Trattoria and Deli

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THE LONGEVITY OF A BUSINESS DEPENDS ON SUCCESSION PLANNING

By Joseph Amato

Proper planning will almost always ensure successful results. Lack of planning will result in unanticipated consequences that could have been easily avoided and may prove detrimental to the continued existence of the company. I am writing this article to provide specific insight and direction on preparing your business for the future.

There will always be multiple challenges in the lifecycle of a business operation. None is more evident than the lack of planning for the continued operations due to retirement, sickness, or death of the existing ownership. The goal is always to be ahead of the curve and minimize or eliminate unwanted surprises that can negatively impact the long-term health and well-being of the company.

In the last five years, I have witnessed this situation multiple times in Las Vegas, where companies owned and operated for an entire generation by a single owner or partnership were not prepared to pass the baton to a predestined individual or group.

Case in point: Cashman Photo began its first Las Vegas photography



concession in 1967. Well before the days of digital cameras, the photography business involved wet labs, and every photo was almost magical to their customers.

Its founding partners, identical twin brothers Morgan and Harris Cashman, initially started their dream of business ownership in the late 1950s. At that time, they lived in Miami, Florida, taking pictures at the various resorts and earning a decent living. Years later, Morgan and Harris Cashman met Caesars Palace founder Jay Sarno who

was fascinated by the amazing photos the young gentlemen had produced and invited them to launch their business operation in Las Vegas. The rest is history.

For the next 44 years, the two brothers grew Cashman Photo, a thriving multi-media enterprise controlling the photographic business in Las Vegas and other strategic locations.

The Cashman brothers were aware that the Company would eventually need to have a plan of



survivorship should something happen to them. But they had no idea what succession planning was or how to implement such a plan.

In the early 2000s, Robert Dolan joined Cashman Photo and eventually became the company's Vice President and Chief Development Officer. Mr. Dolan had an extensive background in the photographic industry and would begin to solidify the company's operational structure complimentary to the Cashman brother's vision for the future.

For the next decade, the Company flourished. Morgan Cashman and Robert Dolan developed a strong business relationship and became great friends. Unexpectedly, Harris Cashman passed away at the age of 75 in 2011, leaving Morgan as the sole owner of the company.

I entered the picture in 2018 to assist Cashman Photo in developing a strategic plan for the future growth of the Company. By 2019 the Company completed revamping its financial budget model,

moving to zero-based budgeting in 2020 and cutting over 14% of its previous year's operating expenses, mostly in the area of staff adjustments and renewed rents with the various resorts in Las Vegas.

But most importantly, in early 2019, Mr. Cashman, Mr. Dolan, and I worked on discussing the details of a succession plan, including Karen Cashman, the spouse of Mr. Cashman. That was a subject they had talked about for years prior. Unbeknownst to us at the time, Morgan Cashman passed away unexpectedly in August 2019 at 83 years old.

The implementation of the basic elements of a succession plan and the associated strategic planning was very timely with its changes to the business operation, especially given the unforeseen death of Morgan Cashman and the extended impact of the COVID crisis. The Company was positioned to withstand the death of its remaining founder and immediately downsize its entire operation, cutting expenses and staff to accommodate

the reduction in workflow and revenue due to the effects of COVID on Las Vegas.

With Morgan's passing, he left the Company in the very capable hands of his spouse, Karen Cashman, and Robert Dolan (CDO), who managed the Company's day-to-day operations of 350 employees and three technology-driven divisions. As the Company began ramping up operations with the Las Vegas resorts reopening, it saw much higher revenue than anticipated while maintaining actual expenses within reasonable budgetary limits. The Company began to realize full operational capacity by the beginning of 2021.

Not very long after settling in, I was approached by Karen Cashman about the future of the Company and her intention to transfer the ownership of Cashman Photo to Robert Dolan as Morgan Cashman originally intended. We immediately started discussing the transfer of ownership and what it would take to complete the process legally, organizationally, and operationally. By October 2021, the transfer of ownership was completed, and Robert Dolan successfully became the owner of Cashman Photo.

As stated earlier, I have discovered many companies throughout the region that are long-held operations with older partnerships or sole owners that are not well prepared for a successful transition of ownership. But be aware that I'm not just highlighting the need for proper planning due to the age of the ownership. Any established company should be thinking about

the future of the company's ownership to provide organizational stability, job security, and financial longevity should key personnel be sidelined by illness or other unexpected circumstances.

The first thing Mr. Dolan initiated once taking ownership of Cashman Photo was to implement a plan for his successors—several key individuals who have worked for the company for decades and are slated as the company's future owners.

The process of creating a formal succession plan can be of great benefit to an organization in many areas. Personnel and positions most vital to the organization are identified above and beyond the ownership. The process also forces a critical assessment of organizational processes and procedures, which leads to improvement in day-to-day facility operations.

When necessary, targeted employees receive substantial training and professional development opportunities that help them prepare for advancement within the organization and potential ownership opportunities. A properly developed succession plan also allows key individuals the ability to cross-train, which helps them better understand their peers' roles and can ultimately improve organizational troubleshooting. These activities will help create an environment where employees feel valued and have a clear path for advancement. That also leads to establishing invested employees, which improves organizational culture, and increases employee retention.

The average employee tenure at Cashman Photo is over twenty years.

Succession Planning for a company can fall into two categories: Emergency or Defined. In each case, there is an intensive review of the company, including the following:

- Identifying the critical roles within the organization, compiling success profiles for each key position, and assessing the staff to determine if the key players are already within the organization or must be solicited from outside the organization
- Creating a development plan and identifying successors
- Preparing implementation of the successor plan when ready.

Each succession plan is a living document that must be constantly reviewed, assessed, and edited as time passes and circumstances change.

I firmly believe that every company owner, no matter the size of their business, should keep the idea of succession in the forefront of their mind. Some owners have it easy when a family member is already part of the organization, ready and eager to step in when the time comes. Other business owners have key long-term employees with the same drive and incentive to maintain the business operation consistent with the previous ownership willing to take the helm in the future. But most do not have either of those scenarios available to them. So they must decide eventu-

ally to sell the company as part of their plan to an outsider or let the company close after they choose to retire or something unexpected happens that forces the company to shut down.

Finally, there is a question of legacy. Legacy means many things to different people. For the business itself, the term may be defined as nothing more than a continuation of sustainable operations. For others, the term legacy may extend beyond that into community relevance, reputation, or family involvement. There is a point in the ownership of a long-standing business at which its very existence becomes more than a place of wealth building and employment—the business itself becomes identified as an institution.

No matter how a business defines its legacy, I can always provide a long list of individuals and other business entities who truly rely on its existence. We understand there are no easy or guaranteed steps in running a business. Trying to operate a business on a daily basis plus completing the work to effectively pass it on intact to a successor is no easy task but doing so correctly provides amazing rewards for founders and their survivors, or those who take control of the business operation for future generations.

Should you require any assistance in business development planning, succession planning, corporate restructuring, or access to capital: Contact Silveridge Group LLC at [jamato@silveridgegrp.com](mailto:jamoto@silveridgegrp.com)



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ABOUT TOWN



Magic in the Air (Photography by Susie Magit)
Above: Sam Novak, Dorothy Cannata Portnoy, Michael Shapiro, Cort Bentz.
Left: Janice Marie Wilson
Below: Lance Robins, Kara Maas, Michele Youell, Cary Vogel, Brian Thornton
Seated: Liz Poltronieri, Richard Sapperstein, Curtis McCoy





Magic in the Air (Cont.)

Above: Susie Weiner Magit, Sparky Lisa, Sondra Lynch, Sandra Roche

Right: Rene Toledo



Above: Sondra Lynch, Cindy Wilke Birkland, Sparky Lisa, Anna Billings, Wendi Schweigart, Ulises Piza



Above: Olga Nabokina, Wendi Schweigart
Left: Claire Nagel, Deng and Nate Jones



The Annual JOI Jazz Soiree
(Photography by OneSeven Agency)

Above: Kelly Clinton-Holmes, Clint Holmes, Naomi Mauro, Gio Mauro
Right: Dave Ostrem
Below: JOI Jazz Orchestra photo by Sameer Arya





The Annual JOI Jazz Soiree cont.

(Photography by OneSeven Agency)

Above: David Ostrem, Paul Ringenbach, Joe Lano, Patrick Hogan

Right: Joe Lano

Below: Linda Woodson



Above: Naomi Mauro

Left: Renee Rampton and Linda Tannenbaum





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