

# CHIC

C O M P A S S <sup>TM</sup>

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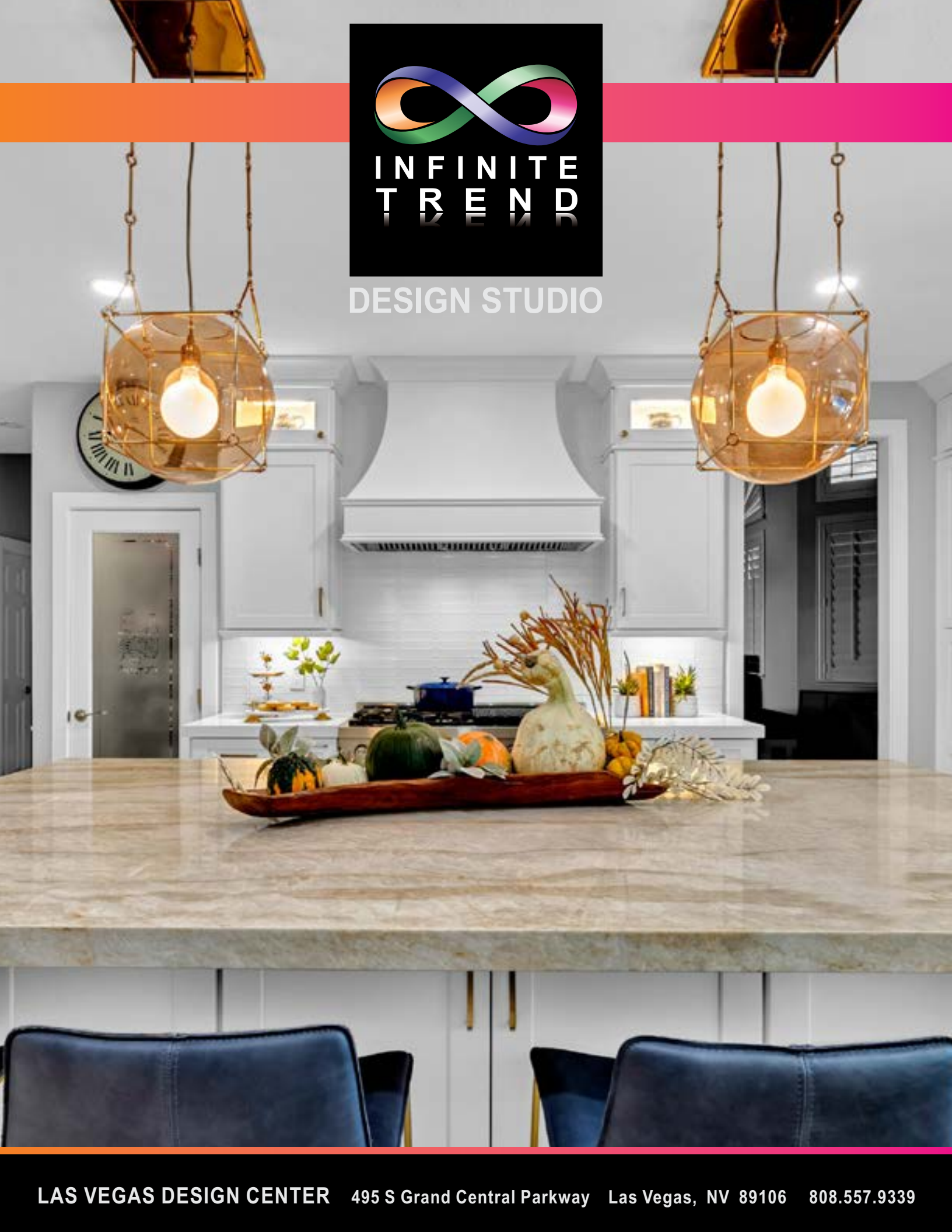


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C O M P A S S

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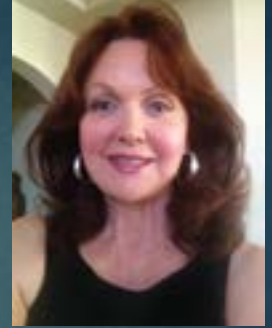
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Stacey Gualandi



Debbie Hall



Kendall Hardin



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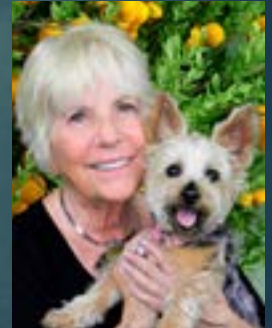
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**Joan S. Peck**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## From the Editor

---

Welcome to the latest edition of Chic Compass! This time we *spring* forward with even more exciting stories happening in and around Las Vegas that our multi-talented writers have written and shared with you. It's all about —all that JAZZ! We hope you enjoy this edition as much as we did to create it for you. We can't wait for you to see what we have for you! Las Vegas is all about ... beauty, fashion, music, food, creativity, talent, and *mixing the old with the new!* Chic Compass has it all in this latest edition of its magazine.

With the renewed interest in jazz expanding, Vic's is the perfect place for the good old times of excellent jazz, food, camaraderie, and the ideal spot to hang. What a place for everyone, but in particular, lovers of jazz! Vic's graces our cover and is the perfect example of bringing back the "old" with new beginnings by using Vegas Vic as one of its draws and presenting an ideal spot for favorite jazz musicians to show off their talents.

One of the favorite segments of Chic Compass has to do with FASHION (and all that jazz)! Speaking of that, you'll want to read about the media launch of the Miss Filipina International (MFI) beauty pageant 2023 under new ownership, taking place at the International Ballroom of The Beverly Hilton.

Fashion has always been a large part of Chic Compass; this issue doesn't disappoint. Whether it's Fashion Week in London or New York, the stunning creativity of the designers will leave you breathless.

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## ON THE COVER

**LOCATION:**  
Vic's Las Vegas

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY:**  
Ann Parenti

Once again, Mark Gunter captures it with his photos of both fashion shows. Sit and marvel. So much beauty!

Don't miss out on what is in store for excellent entertainment with Broadway in the Hood. Its 10th anniversary has something for everyone, with talented, well-known, and local actors working together to create absorbing plays worth seeing. Read more about it and choose the ones you want to see.

Reading about Inside Edition Chief Investigative Correspondent Lisa Guerrero and the details of her assignment is a thought-provoking article about having courage and being a warrior. To offset that, Lisa is an artist who delves herself into a more beautiful, kinder existence.

We bring you other stories about several artists. With studios in Las Vegas and Newport Beach, self-taught artist Dutch Montana "exudes a unique West Coast joie de vivre that distinctly is his own." Another artist, James Stanford, is known as Chair of the Las Vegas Art Commission, his pioneering work establishing the Arts District and his leadership of the Contemporary Art Center, a non-profit operating for three decades. His one-of-a-kind perspective of Las Vegas artwork has become increasingly popular.

We celebrate the fabulous vocalists in this issue for all the joy and beauty they have brought to those fortunate to hear them. Marlene Ricci's angelic voice has taken her on a journey of performing with many famous singers. Her story is exciting. Gifted Melanie Taylor is still creating goosebumps with her extraordinary voice, no matter who she performs with or where. Her story is fantastic!

We can't forget the ballroom dancer Sally Pera with her love of dancing and flair for fundraising. She inspires us with her story of creating the 32 Club, which has been able to raise nearly \$50,000. Awesome.

We bring you a touching and inspirational story of the journey of some of the actors that were this year's Oscar winners. We applaud them all for their talent and grit. Perseverance and faith kept their dreams alive over the years, and we're glad they did!

Food, Food—Glorious Food! Our stories about exciting, tasty, and excellent dining leave us drooling with our tongues hanging out. Where else can one find such fantastic choices? Vic's, with its Italian food; Chill Bar & Grill, with its American/Mediterranean flavors; Echo & Rig Butcher and Steakhouse; Forte Tapas, known for its traditional European comfort food, and Celebrity Chef Todd English's new place for everything good – The English Hotel. Once you view the photos of delicious food choices, you'll want to make your reservations for each site. Bon Appetit!

We are always interested in keeping updated with real estate here in Las Vegas. When you read Trending the Las Vegas Real Estate Market, you'll be able to appreciate the changes in living we have made and appreciate the housing market even more.

You won't want to miss out on reading our business story about the Banking Crisis and the failures of two different banks—Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank—and where that leaves us now as an economy. It is a must-read for everyone.

Until next time ...

*Joan S. Peck*



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Photography by The Camera Company

# MARLENE RICCI

## A MUSICAL FAIRY TALE...WITH DETOURS

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By Samuel Novak

Photography courtesy of Marlene Ricci and Cashman Photo

Just about everyone loves a fairy tale, but few people get to live one. Entertainer Marlene Ricci became one of the luckiest, and her story truly is a fantasy come to life. Nearly forty years later, the details of her remarkable career still resemble a fable. But where it led was anything but predictable.

Las Vegas resident Ricci grew up in Angola, a small village in New York state. A short drive from Buffalo, Angola remains a hidden treasure along Lake Erie's picturesque coastline. With a population of roughly 2,000 citizens, it's hard to imagine that this quiet haven could have fostered one of the most dynamic and sought-after performers of an era.

During her school years, Marlene unknowingly made a future Las Vegas connection when she received voice lessons from Audrey Holmes. Ms. Holmes is the



mother of perennial Strip star Clint Holmes.

CHIC COMPASS asked Ms. Ricci what was in the local water to produce such amazing voices:

"That's what everybody asks! (laughter). That's the \$64,000 Question! There are so many good performers from the Buffalo area. I would go to Clint's house, and his mom Audrey would give me my lessons in their front room. I would see Clint get off the bus, and he would walk by, but we didn't really have time to talk."

"I think it's unfortunate that Clint and I have never had the chance to sing together. We've done the same benefits through the years, but the opportunity never came up. We'll have to put that out to Clint one day."

Her name on casino marquees was still far off when Marlene started creating a buzz. Her first singing opportunity was inside a Moose Lodge at a mere six years old. It was clear that she was not a run-of-the-mill talent.

Marlene's father took his budding star to engagement after engagement, keeping a watchful eye as Ms. Holmes shaped her showmanship skills. "Every so often, we would do a recital at some nursing homes. That's where I think you build your confidence. You have to get out in front of people."

Once she was old enough to perform on her own, Marlene joined a band out of Buffalo. While the



group was performing in Detroit, she crossed paths with a singer named Jim Burgett.

"I was working at a different club, and Jim was at the Romulus Ramada Inn. I went to see him, and he asked if I wanted to sit in for a song or two. Jim said, "My manager keeps telling me I should put a girl in the band." Soon after, they were performing together at Harrah's in Lake Tahoe.

Along with singing in the Burgett

Band, Marlene went into Harrah's as a "relief act" for a few weeks in Tahoe and Reno. "That was a great training ground for me. You could see some of the greatest acts in lounges back then ... Jerry Van Dyke, Don Rickles, and Wayne Newton, all of whom came through the lounges."

Marlene was now twenty years old. She relocated to Las Vegas with Burgett and became a lounge headliner in the Reno/Tahoe/Vegas entertainment



*Sammy Davis Jr., Marlene Ricci, Frank Sinatra*

circles. With her powerful voice and unmatched stage presence, it was only a matter of time before Marlene drew the attention of a real heavy hitter. That moment came courtesy of Mr. Frank Sinatra.

“Frank was singing in the main room, and Jilly Rizzo (Sinatra’s close friend and aide) passed the lounge where I was singing. He said, “Who’s that girl? Who’s that girl? I’m going to bring the old man in to see her.” Time passed, but Sinatra never came.

In the meantime, Rizzo helped Ricci to get a booking at the Aladdin. Sinatra was playing down the Strip at Caesars Palace, and eventually, he DID make it to one of her gigs. Marlene looked out into the audience, and there he was, with an entourage of almost two dozen people.

Within the group were Mr. And Mrs. Danny Thomas and Frank’s

wife, Barbara. Immediately impressed, Ol’ Blue Eyes welcomed her to his table and offered Marlene the opportunity to participate in his upcoming tour.

The little girl from Angola was suddenly at the center of a whirlwind of concert performances, television programs, and live guest appearances. “Once Frank had me as his opening act, that opened the door to other big names, and that’s how I got to work with other stars.”

During the 1970s, the name “Marlene Ricci” was spelled out in lights across Las Vegas. She became a staple of TV chat fests by Dinah Shore, Mike Douglas, and even The Tonight Show. But her favorite by far was The Merv Griffin Show.

“Merv came into Caesars Palace and set up his show. He did it there for quite some time. I was their “go-to gal.” If someone can-

celed, got laryngitis, or something happened, they would call, and I would run over. He was so kind and complimentary. I was on multiple times.”

STAR SEARCH winner Mark O’Toole knows all too well the impact that television and live showcases can have on new and established acts. His successful MARK O’TOOLE VARIETY SHOW follows the “Merv Griffin” format and recently featured Marlene Ricci as a guest.

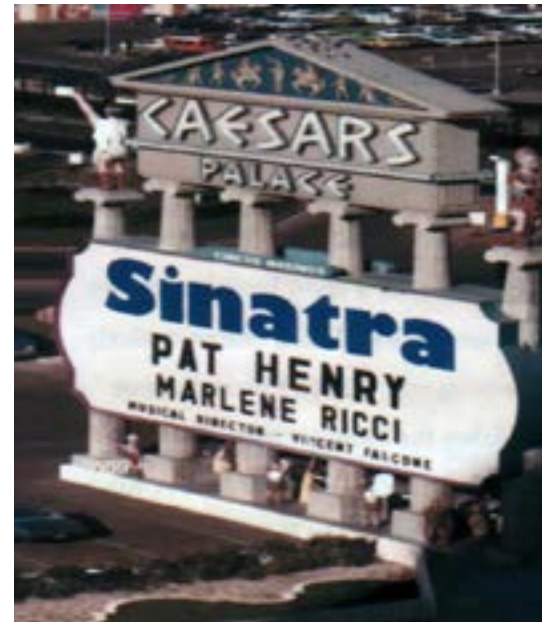
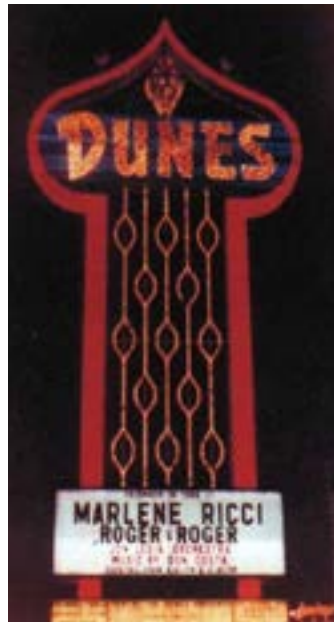
Despite his own decades of experience, the host was stunned by her talent and grace:

“From the moment I met Marlene, I felt an instant connection. I rarely say this, but I was completely blown away by the tone and quality of her voice. She is the real deal...a class act. If you ever get the chance to see Marlene perform, don’t walk...run to get a ticket.”

Endorsements like that allowed Marlene to benefit in ways that some entertainers will never know. Sinatra was so entranced by his protege that he compelled famed musical arranger Don Costa to create charts specifically for her. Those masterworks came in handy when the lead role was being cast for a 1978 television musical.

“Cinderella at the Palace” was a prime-time special filmed at Caesars Palace. Sinatra was set to play “Fairy Godfather,” a muse who introduces a promising young singer to the world of Ve-





gas entertainment. Unfortunately, the logistics of creating such a massive project caused him to drop out of the lead. Paul Anka stepped in, and Gene Kelly was added to narrate.

Ricci should have been a shoo-in for the titular character. “There were a lot of girls considered, and it came down to the top twenty, and then me and another girl,” Ricci recalls. “What cinched it was that I had the Costa arrangements they could use for the finale, which saved them thousands,” she confided with another round of laughter.

Vegas resident Jaki Baskow oversaw casting for the CBS program. She shared her recollections of Marlene and the program with CHIC COMPASS Magazine:

“I went to Caesars’ coffee shop and didn’t know who I was meeting. In walked Frank Sinatra with Jilly (Rizzo). He wanted me to see Marlene Ricci. After the show, he



*Marlene Ricci with the Village People*

asked what I thought. I told him she was beautiful and sang like Barbra Streisand. Then, Sinatra surprised Jaki by announcing, "You're her new agent."

"She was the new star on the horizon," Baskow continued. "We worked on the show with the biggest stars, who were doing Frank and Jilly a favor." Top names included Tom Jones, Sammy Davis Jr., Ann-Margret, Don Rickles, Andy Williams, Jimmie Walker, Rip Taylor, and a special appearance by Frank Sinatra himself.

"Cinderella at the Palace" was directed by Bob Henry, who oversaw television events for David Copperfield, Perry Como, Bob Hope, and legendary Christmas specials by The Carpenters. The two-hour showcase was viewed by millions of people and should have catapulted Ricci into superstardom. But it had the opposite effect on her recording career.

Warner Brothers had been negotiating to sign Marlene for a record deal, an absolute must in the pre-MTV era. Unfortunately, her girl-next-door portrayal was far removed from the "rocker image" that Warner planned to take. "We went back and forth, but the deal just fell through," she recalls.

An album of duos with Frank Sinatra was supposed to happen. But after the death of Don Costa, that never came to fruition. So, Ricci headed to Germany to record a collection of disco songs. The first single was a big success in Eu-



*Frank Sinatra with Marlene Ricci*

rope, and it seemed that things might be back on track. But once again, her career faced a detour. "I signed on with Jack White, the producer for Laura Brannigan. He promised success as he did Laura. She had wonderful songs and a great list of hits. I got the song "Tonight," which made it to the Top-20 list. Then his award-winning team left, changing the streak of his success."

Superstardom may have eluded her, but Marlene Ricci's contributions continue to be recognized. This spring, she'll be honored by the Forgotten Song Foundation with a VEGAS ICON VISIONARY AWARD. The organization recognizes the performance artistry of live music for future generations. And in an ironic twist of fate, the event will be emceed by none other than Clint Holmes.

Las Vegas has greatly changed since the Rat Pack made waves, but the pendulum seems to be

swinging back. Headliners are once again a top draw, dance music is back on the charts, and lounge acts can't be far behind. Marlene is eager to bring back some elements of the Golden Era.

"Isn't it sad that there are no lounges anymore? Young entertainers really have no place to showcase themselves. I'm looking for a spot where we can bring 'old Vegas' back."

A long-in-the-making Cinderella story is about to come full circle. And this time, the fairy tale princess from Angola, New York, will be writing her own happy ending. So, keep your eyes on those casino marquees, and don't be surprised if the name "MARLENE RICCI" reappears.

"My journey thus far has been SIMPLY AMAZING! It continues to be fun and exciting, and I'm looking forward to what lies ahead!"

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# AT LAST... THE LOVE OF JAZZ HAS COME ALONG AT VIC'S LAS VEGAS

By Stacey Gualandi



Who knew the cowboy hat and boots-wearing Vegas Vic was really a jazz lover at heart?

Standing high atop Vic's Las Vegas, the newly opened downtown jazz club and Italian eatery, the name-sake neon icon—albeit a smaller 20-foot version—proudly welcomes back live jazz music to the masses.

Inside the 8,560-square-foot space, you feel like you've passed through a portal to the golden era of cool cats and jazz aficionados.

With warm walnut wood tones, comfortable half-moon banquettes, time-honored touches (one-arm bandit slots!), and the purr of all that jazz permeating throughout, the wait is finally over, thanks to Las Vegas legends the Lowden family.

"It's not new," says owner Paul Lowden. "It's really a throwback."

Paul is the world-famous jazz keyboardist and the one-time owner of the Hacienda, Sahara, Santa Fe, and Pioneer casinos; Sue is the former Nevada state senator and popular Channel 8 anchorwoman.

Together, they've opened over 40 dining venues and produced numerous jazz festivals. Back in the day, they were famous for filling lounges

with big names like Monk Montgomery, Jimmy Smith, Kenny Burrell, and Jack Jones.

(The Lowden's recently produced a soon-to-be-released album with Jones —the man responsible for The Love Boat theme—and the late great jazz organist Joey DeFrancesco, which could mean a future Jack Jones appearance if we're lucky!)

"Lounges were so popular," says Paul. "You could go in and hear music, but today, there is too much distraction. That's not what Vic's is about. This is about music. This isn't cabaret; no one has to entertain. You come to hear the music, and that's the big difference."

Since turning in his casino ownership chips, the Lowden's admit they missed the vintage vibe of the Vegas jazz scene.

"If you're going to be in the business, you've got to build a mega-resort, and the cost of entry is unreal today," laments Paul. "It's crazy, but we're involved in music...."

"...and we know what we like," says Sue.

Cue Vic's.

Nestled in the middle of a growing "cultural epicenter," Vic's sits adjacent to the Smith Center in Symphony Park downtown.

You can take five for an intimate drink at the gaming bar, enjoy dinner and a show, or come back



'round midnight for a nightcap in the lounge lined with Las Vegas memorabilia.

"The wonderful part is that you park, have dinner, and see a show...and you don't have to move your car," says Sue. "Ever."

Two huge headliners have already hit the stage since Vic's opened in February: Jeff Hamilton ("the greatest jazz drummer ever!" per Paul) and vibraphonist Chuck Redd.

"We've contacted pretty much everybody," says Paul of his musician wishlist. "We see Randy Brecker here. We see Tom Scott here. Christian Jacob. Tamir Hadden. Diana Krall might come here...for dinner. HA!"

But what makes this jazz joint so joyous? The juveniles. That is, the high school students from the Las Vegas Academy's jazz studies program who play nightly.

"This place is like a jazz lab!" says a proud Paul. "How wonderful it is with the kids. If they want to play music, they need to get their feet wet, find a place to play, and make a few bucks. What do we call it?"

"A paid internship," jokes Sue.

It's not only a special showcase for this next generation of jazz artists but also a touching tribute to the Lowden's late son Will, who was a student at the Academy and the bass player for the award-winning Las Vegas Acade-

my Jazz Band. A painting of Will hangs in the 14-seat private dining room.

"The students are really in shock," says Sue. "We invited the parents of the kids, and some are professional musicians themselves. They were just blown away. It's an unbelievable thing for the kids to have an opportunity like this... and to play the Great American Song Book."

Vic's is truly a family affair. Their sons, Chris (of Stoney's Rockin' Country fame) and Paul IV, run Porchlight Hospitality. They had a vision for this latest venture, and Sue says they "figured it all out and put it all together!"

"The whole time that we were building this, we were told there was such a void of places to eat and things to do," says Paul IV. "I think there was a promise of more stuff coming down the road, so I guess that's us. We're the first ones to make good on that."

Now, the neighborhood can't get enough of this hot new hang, and they're quickly learning what jazz appreciation is all about.

"People are respectful," says Paul. "Not that it has to be like church, but it's very cool. There is professional respect there."

This made me wonder, is there an unwritten rule in a jazz club?

"Oh yeah, don't talk," says Paul, only half-joking.

"If somebody's there to party and not listen...that's why we have the lounge [separate from the main room]," adds Sue. "We have the bar area, too, because you can't hear anything from the bar; everything is double sealed with a glass wall."

If you're thinking Italian food and jazz don't mix, think again. Chef Miguel Magana's menu has the perfect pitch. I had the Shrimp Fra Diavolo; my husband had the Mahi Mahi. The coda to my meal? Chef Miguel's own invention: ratatouille! I can't say enough about the ratatouille.



*From Left: Stacey Gualandi, Paul Lowden, Sue Lowden, Paul Lowden IV*

Sue says they hope to add a Prime Rib night, a gospel brunch, and clam chowder on Fridays.

"I really want guests to enjoy their dining experience, and we're trying to get that down first," admits Sue. "We want it to be like Ronnie Scott's; people ask, 'Where do you go for jazz in London? Go to Ronnie Scott's.' Everybody knows that. We want it to be that kind of place."

While it hasn't been an easy trip back to the future, Vic's is definitely on its way to being a Las

Vegas live music destination...if these self-described workaholics have anything to say about it. The Lowden's 40-year partnership is certainly a love supreme.

"We just got really lucky," says Sue. "It's a sense of accomplishment. It feels good to look back and think, 'Yeah, we did that.'"

Adds Paul, "We have the same interests. The same outlook on life. We agree on everything."

So whether you drive, ride-share, or take the A Train, we can all

agree it's time to bebop downtown to Vic's. If you play your cards right, you may even see Paul Lowden himself strike up the band!

"Oh, I definitely think so," says Sue.

"He could empty the room. Ha!" quips Paul.

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# CELEBRITY CHEF TODD ENGLISH OPENS THE BOUTIQUE ENGLISH HOTEL IN THE ARTS DISTRICT IN LAS VEGAS

By Elaine and Scott Harris





Many have known Celebrity Chef Todd English as a celebrated chef and restaurateur. He is world-renowned for his Olives and Figs restaurants, is a four-time James Beard Award winner, and has an extensive portfolio of 22 restaurants. In addition to his restaurants in Las Vegas, he recently added a hotel to his vast lineup of new ventures. The Las Vegas Arts District hotel is aptly named The English Hotel and is the first Celebrity Chef boutique, non-gaming hotel in downtown Las Vegas.

The English Hotel highlights 74 rooms in four stories at 921 South Main Street and is part of Marriott's Tribute Portfolio Hotels. Think of it as a destination hotel. Being dog friendly and having no resort fees makes it a natural attraction. Upon walking in, it feels like family—just like what it must be like to be a guest in Todd English's home. Plush luxury furnishings and floor-to-ceiling soundproof windows that adorn the guest rooms afford a relaxing, quiet feeling. The hotel is the delightful blend of entertainment and hospitality seen and felt throughout the property.

Don't miss out on unique touches like the signature cocktail cart, recipe cards featuring Todd English's favorites placed on your pillow at night, and custom silky robes. Guests' amenities include a private secluded pool, outdoor lounge, and

many intimate touches such as a family photo book for guests and well-appointed greenery dedicated to bringing a picturesque feel to the hotel. The iconic decor transports you back to another era, coupled with a modern hip vibe promising an experience that engages all the senses.

Of course, being a chef, the main attraction of The English Hotel is Todd English's The Pepper Club, a Japanese/Mediterranean Asian fusion restaurant named after Chef English's dog. It features a sushi bar, teppanyaki grill, and craft beer created by Beer District Brewing, made exclusively for the hotel. "The restaurant reflects two kinds of cuisine that I love, Mediterranean and Japanese," said English. He brought the geographically distant food traditions together because they are both known for being healthy. "In decades past, blending Eastern and European cuisines was often written off as willy-nilly "fusion." Mediterranean and Japanese gastronomic traditions are complementary, especially regarding umami flavors. What I've seen in cuisine now is that the world has changed," English said. "It used to be 'soy sauce and olive oil, oh my God,' but now there are ways to mix it, match it, and excite the palate. We're going to do a carbonara with dashi, so fun stuff like that," English added.

The Pepper Club restaurant extends an eclectic menu featuring the Soba You Up Burger—an imaginative burger topped with noodles. Of course, there is a wide variety of sushi and a well-por-





tioned raw bar with plenty of oysters and caviar. Dinner selections include Japanese sea bream, fluke, and golden eye snapper. To share, dive into Salmon Spring Rolls with avocado, Philly cream cheese, and honey mustard miso. You can't miss Soi Cowboy Be-bop Chicken 34 roasted 1/2 chicken, sautéed root veggie medley, creamy wasabi mash, and teriyaki miso.

*Pro Tip: Allow 20 min cook time!*

Off the Robata Grill, Pork Belly with cabbage, caramelized onions, scallions, and sampalok sauce for an excellent finish. Why not do it Chef's way? Just plunge right into the Grand Omakase variety of 10 sushi, 21 sashimi, plus

one maki choice and one specialty maki. Moving to the Raw Bar, the Seafood Tower is artful and gastronomically delightful. Engage in a culinary climb up the tower of lobster tail, seasonal oysters, chef-choice sashimi, and oishi shrimp! In the mood for a Roll? How about a Golden one? The G.O.A.T, juicy lobster tail tempura, avocado, ikura, seared wagyu, wasabi mash, fried kale, white truffle oil, and 23kt edible gold flakes!

*Pro Tip: Don't miss the Daily Brunch! 7 am-3 pm Try the Miso Salmon with Baby bok choy, assorted mushrooms, pearl onions, serrano rings, and orange miso sauce.*

Pull up a seat at the gleaming rectangular bar in the center of the room or drink al fresco at the outdoor terrace overlooking the pool, with huge, garage-style doors that easily open during the warmer weather.

*Pro Tip: Join the Bar at Happy Hour Daily 3 -5 pm!*

Take a walk outside and enjoy the vibrant Arts District, where you will find breweries, lots of murals, exciting people-watching, and so much more around every corner you turn; after all, this is Las Vegas. The English Hotel is an attractively eclectic addition to the area and will undoubtedly become a hub for this up-and-coming part of downtown Las Vegas.





Todd English is certainly not resting on his laurels. While the English Hotel in Las Vegas is Chef Todd English's first foray as a hotelier, it will not be his last. Todd English already plans to expand The English Hotel brand nationally and internationally. Todd English's partner, global entrepreneur Keith Burkard has been a propelling force in The English Hotel's global expansion plan, with identified additional locations in Miami,

New York City, London, Los Angeles, Beijing, and Macao, China, in the pipeline. "Our distinctive discipline, innovative mindset, and industry experience has ultimately enabled our portfolio to perform and grow even during tumultuous market conditions," said Keith Burkard, Partner E.H.G. Hospitality. The English Hotel is a visually charming hub of intimacy with an elevated culinary experience powered by Todd English's

food and beverage program, complete with Michelin-star quality room service. Find your way to downtown's only chef-owned boutique hotel, English's Downtown Las Vegas, where fun, frivolity and fabulous food will follow.

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# From Midler to Manilow - MELANIE TAYLOR HIT THE STAGE

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Article by Sheryl Aronson  
Photography by Sheryl Aronson & Sherman Alford (Sasaphotos)



*Photo of Melanie Taylor by Sylvia Moore Photography*

**B**orn and raised in New Orleans, Melanie Taylor inherited her musical pedigree from a family of artists growing up in New Orleans. Her mother, a renowned classical pianist, encouraged Melanie's love of performing throughout her childhood. No surprise, Taylor chose to study theatre and dance in college.

Out of the gate, Melanie Taylor's multi-faceted talent booked her gigs that kicked off an impressive career in the music industry: she was one of Bette Midler's legendary Harlettes for a decade; and toured with John Mayer, Aerosmith, Barry Manilow, Jeffrey Osborne, Patti Austin, and countless others. Her television credits include the 92nd Oscars with Cynthia Erivo Parenthood, The Emmy Awards, The Grammy Awards, American Idol, Oprah, and as a featured vocalist at the Oscars Governor's Ball.

Here's my interview with Melanie Taylor, who is presently

performing with Barry Manilow at the Westgate.

**Chic Compass: What inspired you to pursue a career in the music/entertainment business?**

Melanie Taylor: My mother was a pianist and an educator who debuted with the New Orleans Symphony at age 17. She's had a magnificent career and always encouraged me to pursue what I loved: the theater - where I could sing and dance. I got my degree in theater and dance from Cal State Fullerton and started working immediately. It was a true revelation when I realized that I could get paid for what I loved to do.

My first experience in the studio was with a producer/singer-songwriter who had written a song for a woman and needed someone to do a demo. I didn't know how to use a mic, so I belted out my vocals. He patiently guided me on how to sing into the mic and paid me for my time. That was my first experience in the studio, and I never looked back.

**Chic Compass: Your career has spanned over 30 years. You've toured with major artists such as Bette Midler, John Mayer, Aerosmith, and Barry Manilow, to name a few. How did you get your gig with Bette Midler?**

Melanie Taylor: It's an interesting story. My dear friend told me she heard about the audition to be a Harlette for Bette Midler and



encouraged me to audition for her. At the time, I was working at Disney, singing full-time with the band. I told her I was happy with my gig at Disney and didn't want to audition. However, she twisted my arm, so I took a few days off and went to the audition. Five hundred women later, I got the job!

**Chic Compass: That was a lot of competition.**

Melanie Taylor: Five hundred women auditioned between New York and LA, and I had six callbacks. I never thought about the competition because I didn't want to go in the first place. I'm not competitive; I go with the flow.

**Chic Compass: Describe your experience as a Harlette.**

Melanie Taylor: I loved it! That was my favorite job because being a Harlette incorporated my training as a dancer, actor, singer, and working with props. We had seven costume changes. I felt like I had run away and joined the circus. LOL. I worked with two incredible women: Carol Hatchett and Rhae Ann Theriault. The show was a total production. Every tour was different as we traveled throughout the country. We did eight weeks of sold-out concerts at Radio City Music Hall and performed at Bill Graham's auditorium in San Francisco on New Year's Eve.

**Chic Compass: What was your experience working with Bette Midler?**

Melanie Taylor: She was very serious about being funny - serious

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*“My mother and grandmother always encouraged me to pursue what I loved, which was the theater - where I could sing, dance, and share my love of performing.”*

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about her art. Bette created a persona that was nothing like who she was in everyday life. She is genteel and thoughtful. Her larger-than-life persona was created every night on stage. She made room for our talents and was interested in what was happening in everyone's lives.

**Chic Compass: Please talk about some of the highlights of your career.**

Melanie Taylor: One of the greatest joys has been that my family has seen me perform. There are many performers in my family, and I'm able to share my experiences with them. Everyone in my family is supportive and loving.

One of the biggest highlights of my career was singing with Aerosmith. I was their first female support vocalist - Steven Tyler always wanted a female singer.

**Chic Compass: How did you get that gig?**

Melanie Taylor: Steve Jordan, an amazing drummer /producer, referred me. I met Steve Jordan when I was touring with John Mayer. Interestingly, he told me it was a recording session with Joe Perry and didn't know Steve Tyler would be there. I asked my girlfriend, Laura Jane Jones, if she wanted to join me, and she agreed. When we walked in, there was Steven Tyler, and the experience took

on a whole different meaning. We did five songs on the album *Music from Another Dimension* and, of course, took photos with everyone afterward. Then a few days later, I got a phone call from a blocked number which I didn't answer. Later, I checked my voicemail, and it was Steven Tyler asking me to go on tour with Aerosmith. I thought I was being punked at first ... in what universe would this ever happen? However, everything checked out, and I went on tour with the band. An addendum to the story was that Steven also asked Minda Abair to tour with the band after he heard her play on *American Idol*. He told her he had signed on this great singer Melanie Taylor and



asked if she had heard of me. Mindi told Steven she and I were best friends! The whole story was God's work, for sure.

**Chic Compass: You also toured with John Mayer. What was your experience with his band?**

Melanie Taylor: I loved working with John not only because I was obsessed with his music but also because I got to wear my own clothes (she laughs)! It's funny, that's the first thing I think about, but sometimes wearing costumes is not fun!

We went around the world on tour in 2009/ 2010, and that

was fantastic because I love to travel. The tour included Australia to Tokyo, Europe, and back to the USA. We were promoting the amazing *Battle Studies* album. That was when he was going through rough times after those infamous interviews with Playboy and Rolling Stone, where he was a bit too candid and had a meltdown. But everyone on tour decided to stick with him because that's what friends do. There were some tense moments, but everything turned out fine. I believe this experience was the catalyst for him to reassess his life which he wanted to do. I felt it was a privilege to be with him then because he was a young man finding his way.

**Chic Compass: How do you balance your touring life with your personal life?**

Melanie Taylor: That's a great question. I compartmentalize - when I'm home, I'm home; when I'm gone, I'm gone. I do everything in my power to focus on whatever I'm doing at the time. The longer I do this, the more challenging it is to leave for weeks at a time. When I'm home, I hang out with my husband, visit with the neighbors, cook, read, do yoga, and do my personal creative work. I'm learning watercolor and writing a memoir that takes up much of my head space.

**Chic Compass: Let's discuss what it has meant to you to be a background singer to many of these artists.**

Melanie Taylor: I see my work as a support vocalist. I never think of myself in the back or background ... I don't like that word. I'm not casting a dispersion on your question, but I've thought about this and feel I support everyone I work with. As a vocalist, I support everything happening on stage or in the studio. We don't think of the guitar player as the background guitar player or the trumpet player as the backing trumpet. Everybody supports the work and the music.

When I sing with Barry Manilow, I support him and his incredible music. He doesn't have an ego and wants the music to bring joy to the audience. My approach is I have a message, an intention, and a connection to whatever I'm



*Melanie Taylor with her husband, Terry Wollman*

singing, and I aspire to support whatever artist I'm working with.

**Chic Compass: You have performed with Barry Manilow in Las Vegas and worldwide for many years.**

Melanie Taylor: I auditioned for the gig in 2005 because one of his singers/dancers was leaving who had been a big part of the show. I was referred by different people who had been in the band. Barry liked me, and I got the job. It's been an honor to work with a legacy artist. He's a true showbiz legend with an incredible life force.

**Chic Compass: Talk about working in Las Vegas and doing shows at the Westgate.**

Melanie Taylor: It's been a pleasure and a privilege to be a part of Vegas; however, it's also challenging. I get off the plane, go to the hotel, and do our shows. Vegas is not an easy place to be—the climate can be a little crazy, not to mention the air conditioning and the smoke at the casinos—but I do my best to stay healthy and rested to put on a great show.

Melanie Taylor: The current "Hits" show is essentially the same, but Barry plugs in different songs and medleys to change it from year to year. When we do our Christmas Show, pre-production starts several weeks before, and everything must come out of storage—the costumes, the set pieces, the music. We also highlight a children's chorus from the performing arts

schools and have them join the show in Las Vegas, Palm Springs, or whatever city we're in.

I love being with Barry Manilow and the fabulous band backing us; no computer can ever replace the depth of experience and talent everyone brings with live music. The live experience is fleeting, so if you're not in the audience, you missed it!

Barry Manilow is very down to earth, and all his fans love him. The Christmas show you saw was special because he is a consummate pro and decided to perform, despite not feeling well. However, the audience supported Barry, and its empathy was felt even here onstage. I'm so glad you saw that show because you can appreciate what it takes to do what we do.

**Chic Compass: You also perform in southern California with your husband, Terry Wollman, a producer/composer/musician. Talk about working with Terry.**

Melanie Taylor: I love working with Terry. Before we were a couple, we performed together for years. Terry is focused and dedicated; I've learned so much about music from him. He's a brilliant musician. We've never written a song together, but I've done vocal arrangements for him. We both have an emotional connection to music, and it's my goal for that to come across when we're on stage together.



**Chic Compass: Melanie, what else would you like to say about your career?**

Melanie Taylor: There's a part of me that thinks I don't know if I can do this anymore, and at the same time, there's a part of me that's

amazed at my career and all the experiences I've accrued. There's this one thing that I do well, and I love it. I also have my own band, The Melanie Taylor Experience, and I'm always looking to book us whenever I can. It's crucial to me to produce my own musical

endeavors and maintain my artistic identity. If I can make the audience feel even a bit of what I'm feeling, I did my job. It's an extraordinary profession to be able to offer that gift to people, and I do not take it for granted.



Textile: *Color Works Red Gray*

## AT THE MUSEUM COLLECTION

*by Sina Pearson*

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# DUTCH MONTANA LARGER THAN LIFE

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Article and Photography by Laura Henkel



When first meeting Dutch Montana, you sense he is larger than life. He is tall and gregarious, and his presence engulfs space. In fact, once you start talking to him, you realize he is a man who pushes his own boundaries to nourish his soul. His charisma is infectious. Because he maintains studios in both Las Vegas and Newport Beach, he exudes a unique West Coast joie de vivre that is distinctly his own.

Montana is an entrepreneur with a panache for launching businesses and letting them go so that he may create new ones. This has been Montana's mode of operation since graduating from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. With each new business venture, he would explore roads less traveled to reinvigorate himself in nature. To that end, the stunning vistas found between the Pacific Ocean and the Mojave Desert serve as a source of inspiration for him and a way to reset from the demands of business. These therapeutic jaunts

seeking magnificent environments ultimately ignite the art spirit within him. Much like Michelangelo's *Slaves*, blocks of marble depicting human figures breaking free from stone as if they were alive, Montana's landscape abstract paintings were waiting for him to bring them to life.

As a self-taught artist, Helen Frankenthaler, Mark Rothko, Jasper Johns, Gerhard Richter, and Nicholas De Stael significantly influenced his work. Montana's compositions have a delightful spontaneity to them; the large, lush canvases transport viewers to idyllic sunrises and sunsets along coastlines and high deserts. The paintings inspire a sense of calm elegance through the artist's impressions of color and light. His all-over method, which integrates treatments used by 20th-century Abstract Expressionists, imbues his art with an interesting sense of beauty and mystery. Montana is able to reveal strata of softly subdued gestural space by minimizing shape and approach. Each work of art has a tactile quality that represents both Montana's artistic style and his distinctive cheerful immediacy. This radiant happiness is precisely what Montana is able to convey with such aplomb through his textured and artistic visions. These aspects are, in reality, the artist's defining features.

The first step in Montana's process is to reflect on a sight or impression before moving on to the sketching and color notation stages. Paintings are created in the studio by applying paint with



brushes, palette knives, and other uncommon instruments more typically seen in hardware stores than in an artist's studio. He begins with mixing pigments and making use of bands of color, sections that are then tastefully blurred with residues of things and forms. By combining raw color oil paints and refined linseed oil, Montana often adds a gel-like extender for smooth effects or a thinning agent to develop thinner, more translucent glazes. These glazes are created through the blending of raw color oil paints. "Before I lay the paint on

certain pieces, I will first mix all of the colors together, and then I will use a huge knife to spread the pigment around the canvas," says the artist. Because of the pressure applied by the knife, blended regions of color are produced, similar to the *sfumato* that can be seen in a scene of an ocean at sunset. After that, the painter will complete the work by applying varnish, multiple layers of varnish, and then between six and twelve months later, Damar will be added. "I feel that the most creative and powerful things in life are not complicated. It's possible that



a straightforward painting with three to four colors, crisp lines, or even just the “gesture” of a brush can have more of an impression than something with a lot of intricate detail. It is similar to how in mathematics and physics, the equations that are the most revolutionary and that answer the most complicated issues in the universe are simple and elegant.”

*ABOVE: Arizona - Oil Wax on Canvas 69 x 24 cm, Aqua Gold Abstract - Oil on Canvas 102 x 76 cm, and Fire on the Horizon - Oil on Canvas 91 x 91 cm*

*RIGHT: Laguna Beach Canyon 28 - Oil on Canvas 102 x 51 cm, and Laguna Beach Canyon 34 - Oil on Canvas 168 x 168 cm*





*LEFT: Ocean Dream - Oil on Canvas 91 x 21 cm*

*BELOW: Silver Moon - Oil on Canvas 152 x 122 cm, Beijing Sunburst - Oil Acrylic on Canvas 183 x 152 cm, and Abstract 004 - Oil on Canvas 102 x 76 cm*

*FAR RIGHT: Spring in Manhattan, New York - Oil on Canvas*

I had the extraordinary opportunity to visit Montana's studio gallery in the heart of downtown Las Vegas. The Scotch Eighties property spans 15,000 square feet and has been meticulously curated to display works of art according to the dimensions of the interior space. The location has an abundance of natural lighting as well as ambient lighting, which enables shadows to move across canvases and reveal more nuanced details, which enhances the visual experience. Because of his extensive collector base and collaboration with interior designers, he constantly produces new works. At the time of this article, he had just finished a site-specific commission, Four Palms Laguna, measuring 11' x 5' for a home in town created for a 25' foyer, and was in the process of painting a custom piece from his Lucky 7 series at the request of an interior designer for a penthouse on The Strip.



"It is a great pleasure of mine to collaborate with interior designers on the production of large-scale works of art for their respective clients. Bigger is better, and it's a challenge and a pleasure for

me to create pieces suitable for use in expansive interior settings. The majority of the time, customers ask me to produce additional works of art, which ultimately results in an original series tailored specifically for that customer."

When I spoke with the interior designer who commissioned Four Palms Laguna for his client, he stated that his client was "immediately drawn to this series the moment she stepped into Montana's studio gallery. She was particularly fascinated by the palette knife strokes and the many ways the light reflected off the canvas, as she was an enthusiastic art collector. My client was completely unaware that Montana had added 22 and 12-karat gold leaf to the painting based on their interactions. The results were astounding despite the understated use of the metals. The act moved my client to tears. We had a dialogue with the artist, and it was a conversation that will stay with us forever. In the future, I will definitely will work with Montana again. How could I not?"

Not only does Montana's studio gallery act as a source of inspiration for the artist, but it is also an ideal setting to allow collectors to resonate with the paintings in an exclusive environment. Jill Abelman, Owner and Principal Designer of Inside Style, said, "Upon stepping into Montana's space, I was impressed by the grandeur. The paintings of Montana almost encourage viewers to let their minds wander. When I was looking at his work, one of the thoughts that went through my



head was, 'I wish I were there.' His use of color and sweeping brushstrokes added so much to the ambiance of the room. That made me desire to experience more. One comes away from the visual experience feeling absolutely uplifted, while at the same time being conscious that what they are partaking in is not the typical art experience seen in Las Vegas."

One of the many reasons why Las Vegas is one of my favorite

cities in the world is because it is populated by some of the most creatively gifted people from all over the world. Because of this draw, the culture is one that invites people from all different walks of life and is remarkable in its own way. Visitors, and even some people who call this wonderful city their home, believe that the region is devoid of noteworthy artwork and artists. My opinion is not the same. Outside The Strip, there exists a veritable treasury of amazing art for those collectors.

You merely need to be aware of where you should look.

As an expert in the realm of art advisory services, it is my distinct honor to present Dutch Montana as a fresh beacon of light in our neon metropolis. There is no question that Dutch Montana is one-of-a-kind in every sense of the word. His paintings are a clear representation of his ingenuity as well as the talent that he possesses as an artist. His artwork, much like the man himself, is in a category all by itself. Montana's artwork is made available globally through Singular Art and may be found in a diverse range of private collections in several countries worldwide.

Visit [www.singularart.com](http://www.singularart.com) for more.



*ABOVE: Golden Circle - Acrylic and Oil on Canvas 152 x 122 cm*



*LEFT: California Gold - Oil on Canvas 91 x 213 cm*

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# CHRISTOPHER TODD

# JAMES STANFORD

## THE MAN BEHIND THE GENIUS / NEVADA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL ARTIST

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By Laura Henkel

I first heard of James Stanford when I moved to Las Vegas in 2007. I soon became aware of his philanthropic endeavors, his position as Chair of the Las Vegas Art Commissioner, his pioneering work establishing the Arts District, and his leadership of the Contemporary Art Center, a non-profit operating for three decades. Until then, I had never heard of him as a creative. When our worlds eventually collided, my firm, ArtCulture PR, was recruited to publicize the artwork he had been quietly creating since his 20s while also giving back to his community. While many are aware of his Shimmering Zen series—his spiritualized take on the glitz and ecstasy of Las Vegas—few know his ongoing exploration of new mediums and development of new work.

Stanford is an artist known as an alchemist because of his extraordinary capacity to take the visual language of Las Vegas and simplify it, making it more potent and

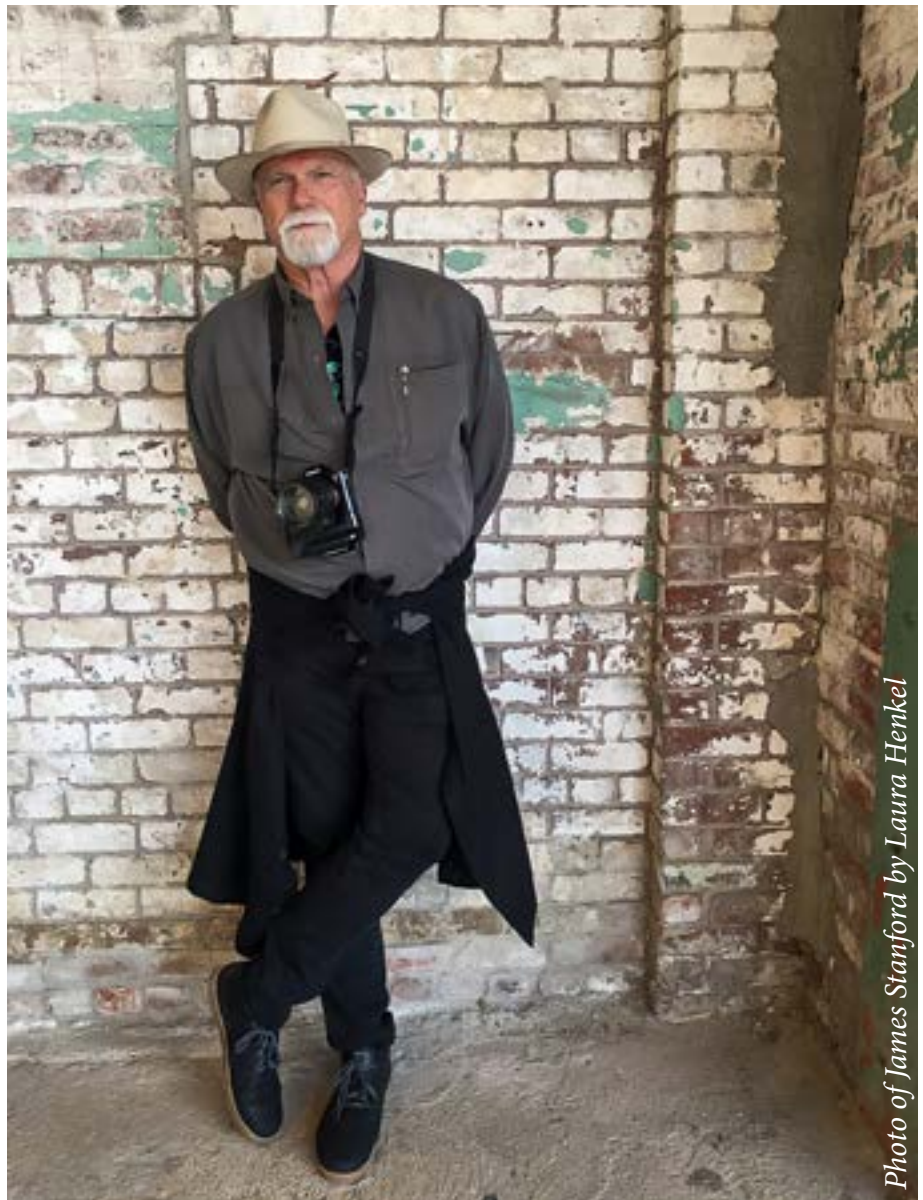


Photo of James Stanford by Laura Henkel





*LEFT: Buddha.Mask (Backlit Lenticular)*

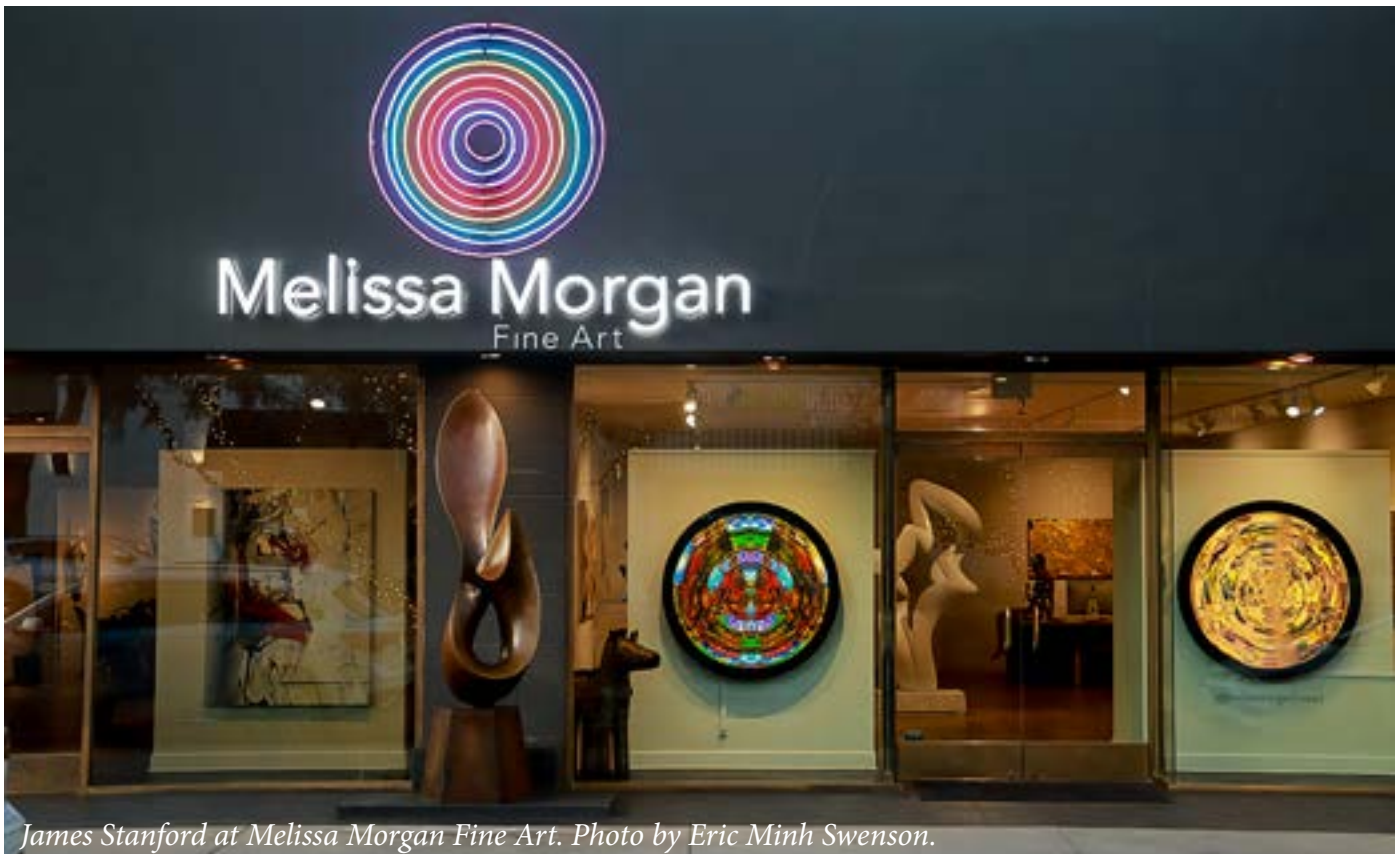
accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds, Stanford's work has evolved into a prized possession among art collectors. He is able to capture the excitement and vigor of the city without sacrificing the city's delicate beauty. As a result, the work of art that he produces is something that everybody can enjoy. Stanford stands out as a true artist in a world of art where there are so many various styles because he has managed to mix the complexities of the city with a sense of simplicity and beauty. This makes his work particularly notable. His artwork is a reminder of the beauty and vibrancy of Las Vegas and the emotion and energy that can be found inside its walls.

Artists like Michael Heizer, Robert Smithson, Walter De Maria, and Gianfranco Gorgoni have drawn inspiration from the immensity and majesty of their environments, and Stanford's work connects to the canon of these and other contemporary artists. On the other hand, Stanford's work is an innovation, a prismatic distillation of artistic discovery portrayed through meditative abstraction. In the huge expanse of desert, these pieces are like shining beacons. His portfolio is based on his Las Vegas photographs that have been digitally collaged to create a collection of mesmerizing imagery. Unique to this form of artistic expression are geometric tableaux bursting with shifting and overlapping hues,

evocative. He has earned this label because of his unusual ability to do both things. The depth of Stanford's comprehension of the intricacies and nuances of urban life and the city's magnetic pulse is a defining characteristic of his artistic output. His compositions are vivid and brilliant, giving spectators a feeling of sensory overload with each look at his work. Not only is Stanford's portfolio admired for its aesthetic value and level of sophistication but also for

the Zen Buddhist meditations portrayed within them. These meditations convey a sense of calm and harmony. His works also elicit a sense of melancholy and introspection. His talent for capturing the spirit of Las Vegas has won him the attention of many art collectors, not just from the West Coast but also from other parts of the country and the world.

Since his art presents a one-of-a-kind perspective of Las Vegas



*James Stanford at Melissa Morgan Fine Art. Photo by Eric Minh Swenson.*

forms, and illuminations. The artist employs the alchemy of seeing potential in things that seem to have none at first glance, so transforming the profane into the sacred. The energy and stillness of the desert and the infusion of city lights only serve to heighten the strong sense of mystique that one gets from here and the inspiration as strange tableaux crisscrossed by light-infused patterns and a sense of pareidolia.

"It's a modern take on psychedelic work," says Alec Longmuir of Melissa Morgan Fine Art. "At the same time, it plays with the traditional ideas in pattern building and geometry all through the lens of a riot of color." He adds, "You can see the more in-depth story behind each piece when you peel back the layers of the onion and realize that they are actually

collages made from Stanford's photographs. These works are similar to journals in this regard. Because of Stanford's impressive history as an artist and his already-established reputation, collectors find that his works have a lot of appeal. One never gets tired of the task because there is always something fresh to see, which is a positive aspect from a personal standpoint."

Born in 1948 in Las Vegas, his work symbolizes the greatest aspects of the city. Residents and visitors to Sin City have had the opportunity to view his work at various public sites, including Harry Reid International Airport, The Strat, Downtown Grand, and countless enormous murals and pop-up pieces around the city. Stanford makes the observation that he wants to emphasize,

even at this late stage of life, the significance of the process of becoming the journey, and he says, "We are not solid entities; we are process and energy." That is a direct reference to the city's humble beginnings as a pioneer town to its absolute magnificence as one of the world's entertainment meccas. According to Stanford, "The energy and pulse of Las Vegas, as well as the city's propensity to perpetually reinvent itself, drive the contemporary artist to transform the obvious into the sublime." The energy of Las Vegas, its pulse, and its ability to perpetually recreate itself are all captured in these limitless works, which contain what Stanford refers to as "the excitement of Las Vegas."

John Barry of Kevin Barry Fine Art, whom Stanford has collaborated

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*“We are not solid entities; we are process and energy.”*

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with on numerous occasions for site-specific works for a variety of individual residences as well as corporate collections, sums up his Shimmering Zen series best. Barry states, “Stanford is unlike any other work of art that I’ve seen.” A work that is visually engaging and has recognizable subject matter but is executed in an original way. In particular, the parts of the kaleidoscope represent famous Las Vegas locations. Clients who want to emphasize and showcase Las Vegas, but want something more sophisticated than the “Welcome to Las Vegas” sign, really connect with

Stanford’s work and find it resonant with them. His work compels the viewer to indulge their feeling of wonder by examining the piece in greater detail and engaging in an attitude of discovery in relationship to the components of the installation: ‘Which symbol does that represent?’ or ‘I remember that sign; thirty years ago, we used to go there with my aunt and Uncle!’ The narratives that emerge from his work contribute equally to the whole experience as the artwork itself does.”

When exploring James Stanford’s art, we are treated to a thrilling

journey that reveals fascinating insights about the man behind the genius. Thanks to public museums and institutions like The Neon Museum and the City of Las Vegas, we have the opportunity to learn about and appreciate the artist’s extraordinary talent. Examples of his art may be found in prestigious collections all over the world. Looking over Stanford’s body of work, perhaps we can see his unique brilliance and come to value him as the beautiful human being and rare diamond that he is.

For my part, I consider it one of the biggest blessings in my life to count Stanford not only as a valued client but also as a dear friend I hold in high esteem. It has been a joy to watch him achieve success over these many years.



Del Mar. Curation by Kevin Barry Fine Art for The Strat. Photo by Laura Henkel.



Vicki Night



Scrolls. *Installation at The Strat; curated by Kevin Barry Fine Art.*



Old Tropicana. *Installation at Downtown Grand; curated by Ryan Doherty.*

Because of his presentation and exhibition at the Format Festival in Derby, which took place in the United Kingdom this past March, the path has been made for new projects in the United Kingdom, Europe, and Asia. And within days of his return trip from London, he was acknowledged for his contributions to the arts and the community by having his name inducted into the UNLV Hall of Fame. In April, the Forgotten Song Foundation gave him the VIVA Award recognizing outstanding achievement in Visual and Performing Arts in Las Vegas. I am ecstatic that attention is being given to Stanford's many years of artistic and philanthropic efforts to promote Las Vegas, thereby establishing his place as one of Nevada's most influential artistic ambassadors.

I am excited to see where his creativity takes him next. With that in mind, I say, "Captain, my Captain. Here's to favorable winds and following seas!" I sincerely wish that you, the reader, will discover his work and enjoy the same sense of pride for his artistic contributions on behalf of our neon metropolis. It should be noted that the 13th of October is officially James "Jim" Stanford Day in Las Vegas per a Proclamation issued by Mayor Goodman. Celebrate art, my friends, for art has the power to transform space and build community! It certainly is more beautiful when it is inspired by the neon lights of Las Vegas.



*ABOVE: Mayor Goodman proclaims the 13th of October James Stanford Day in Las Vegas.*

*BELOW: Photo of James Stanford by Laura Henkel.*





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# Faith

## A Coming-of-Age Culinary Tale

Forte Tapas' Nina Manchev Proves You're Never Too Young to Follow Your Dreams

By Heather Turk

One of Las Vegas' most beloved restaurants wouldn't be celebrating its 14th anniversary this year if its owner didn't have a lot of faith in herself at a young age.

"I'm a dreamer," said Nina Manchev, who decided to open the foodie favorite, Forte Tapas, when she was just 22 years old. "It was just a perfect storm of self-confidence and no fear. I wanted to work at a few restaurants while in college, but they wouldn't hire me because I didn't have experience. I even offered to work for free so that I could get the experience. Life is interesting that way."

Born in Bulgaria, Manchev moved with her parents and grandmother to Chicago when she was just three years old. About a year later, her parents relocated to Las Vegas, where Manchev



*Food has always been a love language for Manchev. "All of my best memories have centered around a good meal with close ones," she said. Photo by Baylee Jo*





*Manchev is a direct importer of caviar and recently began offering it at Forte Tapas. Photo by Baylee Jo*

grew up, and went on to study hospitality, food, and beverage at UNLV. With dreams of opening a restaurant that highlighted the food and culture of European cuisine in an approachable and modern way, Manchev decided to gamble on herself while still in college and opened Forte Tapas in August 2009.

Forte Tapas, known for its traditional European comfort food with a menu that features dishes from countries like Russia, Hungary, Georgia, and Bulgaria, has long been somewhat of a hidden gem in Las Vegas despite being featured on Food Network's hit series, "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives." Today, the local favorite on South Rainbow Boulevard is thriving, offering "foodies" the unique ability to go on a culinary journey through Eastern Europe without leaving Southwest Las Vegas.

Manchev acknowledges that the restaurant's path to success wasn't always easy. "I think I focused too much on being taken seriously as a 22-year-old opening a restaurant, which I know for some people is inspiring," Manchev recalled. "Truth is, I was cocky and egotistical, which caught up with me. I was too proud to ask for help because I didn't want to seem stupid, but that led me to learn lessons the hard way."

As the daughter of immigrant parents who developed their own businesses, Manchev was exposed to the ups and downs of entrepreneurship from a young

age. Once she set out to open her own restaurant, she knew she had a responsibility not only to herself but also to her family, staff, and eventually customers to keep her dream going.

"Running this restaurant has been my biggest teacher in life," stated Manchev, who eventually left UNLV a few credits short of getting her degree. "You do not see what you are capable of until you have to face it, and you don't have anything to fall back on. You can't count on a paycheck, and that's scary, but you can figure it out, create your path and provide an opportunity for those who work for and with you in the business. Everyone will always give you input and advice; the most important piece of advice is what works for you. You have to learn to trust your gut. No one will care about your dreams as much as you do."

Today, Manchev is no doubt living her dream. In addition to serving dinner, Forte Tapas recently began serving lunch on select days to accommodate even more customers. Several delightful new dishes have been added to the already flavorful menu as well, including a large Balkan Grill Master platter featuring an assortment of traditional grilled meats that guests can share, a Burrata & Prosciutto Salad that's perfect

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*"You do not see what you are capable of until you have to face it, and you don't have anything to fall back on."*

for the warmer months, and a selection of savory Banichkas (Bulgarian-style filo dough pastries). Other menu highlights include the Mushroom Pelmeni (wild mushroom dumplings), the Stuffed Mini Sweet Peppers made with seasoned ground pork, herbs, rice, and a yogurt dill sauce, and another new menu addition, the Chicken Roulade: lightly fried chicken breast rolls stuffed with fresh mozzarella and creamy avocado.

Forte Tapas recently began offering caviar service, too, which Manchev knows quite a bit about as the CEO of The Caviar Collective. Founded in 2019 to create unique activations and tastings while also educating people on caviar and how to enjoy it, the luxury lifestyle caviar brand is currently in the midst of building an e-commerce site to make caviar more accessible to everyone around the U.S.

"I have a lot of passion for the brand we have created and the trust we have earned from our dear clients—from Michelin-star restaurants to local gourmands who expect the best," Manchev proudly stated.

While Manchev no doubt has a lot on her plate with Forte Tapas and The Caviar Collective, that doesn't mean she isn't still cooking up new opportunities in her head. Manchev admitted she would like to explore other locations for Forte Tapas—perhaps even outside of Las Vegas. She would love to reach a broader audience and share her culture with

more people as well by launching a cookbook of Forte Tapas favorites that also highlights other chefs' recipes from Bulgaria.

"I come from a small country, and not a lot of people realize how beautiful and rich in art, history, and culture it is and how warm people are," Manchev said. "Hospitality is a part of our DNA!"

In the meantime, Manchev appreciates everyone who took a

chance on a young (and slightly egotistical) twentysomething who ended up flourishing as a businesswoman—and person—while following her dreams of bringing her native culture and cuisine to a new audience.

"Over the last 14 years, our mission at Forte Tapas has been to provide homemade European comfort food without sacrificing the quality of ingredients," Manchev concluded. "We really care about our customers and



*Manchev said many of Forte Tapas' traditional European dishes are made from family recipes. Photo by Cole Curtis*

the cuisine we create. We make everything from scratch, and the team here takes pride in providing a welcoming, homey experience. It may all look simple, but good things take time, and it is an intimate experience for us to share what we do with our guests."

Forte Tapas is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 10 p.m. and Monday from 5 to 10 p.m. In addition to its 65-seat dining room, the restaurant has a 30-seat patio that's perfect during the spring and fall.

For more information or to make a reservation, visit [barforte.com](http://barforte.com).



*Forte Tapas' new Chicken Roulade is so delicious you'll want every roll for yourself. Photo by Cole Curtis*



*Manchev said she loves how people can escape in a restaurant. "It's a way to relax, connect, let loose, and let someone else take care of you." Photo by Baylee Jo*



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## LISA GUERRERO: ROAD WARRIOR - BRAVE HEART

By Stacey Gualandi  
Photography courtesy of Lisa Guerrero

On just one of a dozen recent investigations, Inside Edition Chief Investigative Correspondent Lisa Guerrero flew to Boston, interviewed the grieving parents of a 13-year-old killed in a tubing accident in Aruba, hopped on a plane to Aruba, then confronted the company that failed to use safety measures that would have saved the young teen's life. All in 48 hours.

It was a brutal assignment, but it was just a typical day in the life of this fearless road warrior.

"It was so worth it," says Guerrero of this consumer safety story.

Since Guerrero joined the long-running newsmagazine 17 years ago, chasing "bad guys with a microphone and lip gloss" has become her mantra. Her multiple award-winning stories uncover "crime, scams, child abuse, and cold case murders." Wheth-



er it's diving in a dumpster, disguising herself as a grandmother, ambushing wealthy preacher Kenneth Copeland (that video amassed one billion views!), or solving the murder of 2-year-old Juliette Geurts, there is very little she wouldn't do on camera to right a wrong.

Now, this seasoned storyteller has more than earned her reputation as a journalist-for-justice with a brave heart of gold and is sharing her personal journey in a candid memoir, *Warrior: My Path to Being Brave*.

"My mother [Lucy], a Chilean immigrant, was diagnosed with lymphoma, and she knew she would die soon," shares Guerrero. "She pulled me aside and said, 'Never forget, Lisita, that Guerrero means warrior, and you were born to fight.' She passed away within a month of that conversation, so at eight years old, I didn't know what my last name meant; I didn't know what a warrior was; I didn't know what being brave was, and so it took me decades to unpack that brief message that my mother gave me."

In her book, Guerrero chronicles her incomparable decades-long career to warrior status. She went from LA Rams cheerleader-turned-sportscaster-turned-national television host-turned-Monday Night Football sideline reporter, with the joy of victories and agony of defeats throughout. In the process, she uncovered what bravery truly is and how we can all become a superhero!

# Lisa Guerrero

CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE CORRESPONDENT FOR *INSIDE EDITION*

## Warrior

*My Path to Being Brave*



Lisa Guerrero and I have known each other for almost 20 years. As a former Inside Edition reporter, I was very excited to grab our lip gloss, reunite and talk about being brave, finding balance through art, and living up to the name "warrior."

**CHIC COMPASS: Where does your bravery come from?**

LISA GUERRERO: My bravery comes from empathy. I have empathy because I have gone through trauma and challenges: sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and misogyny. All these things I recount in my book *Warrior* to great, painful detail. Those are gifts. Those things that happened to me are an essential part of my story because I was able to turn



pain into power, which you must do to overcome obstacles.

**CHIC COMPASS:** Does that help you in your storytelling?

LISA GUERRERO: I have gone through trauma, and other people I interview in my stories have gone through trauma. That's how I connect with them, and because they trust me to tell me their stories, I then go forward and chase the bad guy or hold somebody accountable on behalf of the story or behalf of the survivor. That tells me the story—not because I want to chase bad guys, although it is fun—I'm doing it in service to the story.

**CHIC COMPASS:** There is a lot to learn about you in your book. Many may not know you create mosaics when you aren't busy chasing the bad guys or telling stories! How did that happen?

LISA GUERRERO: My dad and mother were both artists, as were my grandparents, so I come from a long line of people who were painters, musicians, and performers. When Richard and I were little, we were encouraged to take art classes, make crafts, and be artistic. When I got older, my ex-husband and I were on a honeymoon in Europe, and while in Barcelona, we saw all the Gaudi

mosaics everywhere. That was really inspiring to me, so when I got home, I said, "I want to learn how to make mosaics!" I took a weekend mosaic class here in Los Angeles...I only did one day of the two days, but through that one day, I learned how to break glass, cut glass and ceramic, attach glue grout—just the basics of how to do mosaics—and then I was off!

**CHIC COMPASS:** Is there more to this than just being crafty?

LISA GUERRERO: Ultimately, I also connected with it because of the concept of taking broken things and making them whole or making them into something beautiful. When I understood that concept, everything fell together. I realized, "This is the art form that I'm going to be practicing forever," because anything that's broken, like a piece of china that I drop, or a tile outside that breaks, or there's a glass base, I keep everything because all these pieces I'll use in future projects. I use many recycled and up-cycled materials and vintage jewelry in my pieces, so now I have a defined style. But it started with just the concept of taking broken things and making them whole.

**CHIC COMPASS:** You write that this job is very dangerous. As an empathetic person, how do you deal with the risk and the emotional nature of your storytelling?

LISA GUERRERO: When I finish a traumatic story, I usually go into







my art studio and break a bunch of glass. It's very cathartic, and I think it releases much of the depression, the anxiety, or the feelings of, "Did I do enough? Was that good enough?" I step into my studio and become a much more creative, relaxed person there. That's been important to me. I think that's good. Everybody needs to have that balance. We all need to find out what it is.

**CHIC COMPASS: Whenever you finish a mosaic, do you feel the same kind of satisfaction that you have when you complete one of your stories?**

LISA GUERRERO: Oh yeah. There's a beginning, middle, and end. I think these pieces of art—now I've probably made nearly 200 mosaics—and every single one of them tells a story and has a meaning behind it. It is specif-

ically emotionally connected to me in some way, the same with my stories. I connect with every single one of my investigations, and they all have meaning to me. I remember them, my survivors and victims, and the parents of the children killed in an accident. I remember everybody, and it's something I will carry with me forever, that connection to those victims.

**CHIC COMPASS: Can we all "be brave" like you?**

LISA GUERRERO: We all have an inner warrior, and we all have bravery. We just need to be able to unleash it and exercise it. I be-

lieve bravery is like a muscle: the more you use it, the stronger you become. Over time, when life calls for it, and it will, there will be a big moment when you will be called to be a superhero. Unless you practice being brave, you won't do it, but if you practice being brave every day, you will step into that place, and you will tap into the inner badass that you have inside you, and you are going to conquer that dragon. You will be that superhero because you practiced it in small ways.

**CHIC COMPASS: What kind of feedback have you received since the book came out in January?**

LISA GUERRERO: It's been so gratifying. I was not expecting the amount of feedback from people saying, "This happened to me! Something similar happened to me! I've experienced that!" And especially from men, who have said, "Oh my gosh! I had no idea that women faced this kind of thing! I didn't know you faced that!" I even had people apologize to me for having badmouthed me previously, including one big columnist from the LA Times, Larry Stewart. I was blown away by the connection that people have with the story. I thought it would be my story, and hopefully, I would have tips and help people, but people have specific things about how it helped them

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*Warrior author Lisa Guerrero says to "practice courage every day."*

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and things that they related to. So that's been the best part of it, and the glowing reviews. I can't get over how positive people are about the book.

**CHIC COMPASS: Do you think you have another book in you?**

LISA GUERRERO: I do. I feel like I'm still having adventures, learning, and discovering myself. As we get into our 50s—women especially—I think so many of us feel our sell-by date is up. It's not! We still have a lot to accomplish. We still have a lot of ways that we can grow and experience things. I think we have a lot to

share. Men are still accomplishing and expected to be CEOs and captains of industry into their fifties and sixties and beyond. Why can't we? So, I'm still working. I've got two jobs: *Secrets of Playboy* and *Inside Edition*; I'm trying to develop my book into a series; I've got some other projects on the side I'm working on, so I still have things I want to accomplish and stories I want to tell.

**CHIC COMPASS: Do you believe that you have lived up to your warrior name Guerrero?**

LISA GUERRERO: Now I believe that I live up to my name, but as you will read in *Warrior*, there

were many times that I thought I wasn't living up to that name; that I had made mistakes; that I had compromised; that I had brought shame to my heritage and my mother's name. So it took me years to refocus my life and purpose to say, "This is what I am meant to do. That is what I'm going to work towards. These are the things that are important to me." Now, I wake up every day and feel like a warrior!

**CHIC COMPASS: Thank you! Now I'm going to go practice being brave!**

To learn more about *Warrior*, go to [lisaguerrero.com](http://lisaguerrero.com).



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# grace

## Broadway in the Hood

by Kendall Hardin  
Photography courtesy of Broadway in the Hood

The curtain has gone up on the 10th Anniversary of Broadway in the Hood, one of the town's most inventive and ambitious theatre companies ["BITH"].

As a national theatre program with its home office based in Las Vegas, the company is dedicated to making a positive impact in communities across the United States, focusing on disadvantaged youth between the ages of 10 to 20 living in neighborhoods often plagued with violence, gangs, drugs, and other atrocities hard to imagine and overcome.

"Broadway in the Hood is comprised of everyday Americans just like you and me," contends Torrey A. Russell, BITH Founder and Director of A Source of Joy Theatricals, "who have dreams and goals to better themselves while side-stepping the cycle of violence, abuse, and poverty."



*The Lion King*

The organization offers educa-



*Cast of The Wiz performed in 2016*

tional and cultural opportunities to scores of America's future potential leaders. BITH has captured the attention and support of city, state, and federal officials, notable celebrities, the American Theatre Wing, and national organizations like the NAACP.

Since its inception, BITH has produced major original productions dealing with subjects ranging from teen pregnancy, interracial dating, childhood obesity, homelessness, homosexuality, bullying, and slavery. In addition, the company has presented some of the biggest Tony Award-winning Broadway blockbuster hits like *The Wiz*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Dreamgirls*, *The Lion King*, and *The Color Purple*.

The company's emphasis on the community and its focus on social awareness has garnered attention from a range of donors and supporters who share its mission. In just ten years, BITH has been invited to perform at major festivals, concerts, television programs, and theatrical events nationwide.

In the spring of 2013, Broadway in the Hood was surprised when

Grammy Award-winner and R&B Diva Kelly Price, with the cast and crew of the TVOne Hit "R&B Divas LA," came to Las Vegas for its production of *Dreamgirls*.

"The company was absolutely elated when Dr. Maya Angelou invited our cast to perform with her in Phoenix," recalled Russell. "In return, she invited all of us to an evening where she shared her life as a child and how she was able to turn her life around."

Over a dozen BITH Celebrity Ambassadors include luminaries such as Whoopi Goldberg, Gladys Knight, and Deniece Williams, and local performers Clint Holmes and Earl Turner. The sensational Ben Vereen serves as the company's Director of Global Outreach.

Broadway in the Hood also provides an array of free theatre classes covering dramatic acting, dance, vocal training, audio design, lighting, stage management, costume design, and technical stagecraft.

Performances are low-cost and free at times to the communities

BITH serves with the goal of providing opportunities for audiences of all socio-economic and culturally diverse backgrounds to experience the magic of live theatre... while transforming lives forever!

## **BITH's 10th Anniversary Super Season**

The company has already debuted two of its performances in the 2023 season lineup: *Bring in the Light: All Rise!* in January and *American Son: The Tour* in February.

### ***Bring in the Light: All Rise!***

BITH delivered an original musical created, designed, and built by Broadway in the Hood students - featuring an array of music, monologues, sets, and costumes. Described as "emotional, riveting and raw," this spirited production highlighted today's youth in their own words, from their own lives.

### ***American Son: the Tour***

The company's acclaimed production of Christopher Demos-Brown's *American Son* made its triumphant homecoming in the West Las Vegas Library Theatre in February in partnership with the NAACP. This nail-biting drama takes place in the waiting room of a police station in the middle of the night, where parents of a teenager anxiously await news of their son, who the police may have picked up. The play probes the racial divide in American cul-



*Cast of Ain't Misbehavin' performed in 2017*

ture and helps audiences understand the importance of valuing each other, respecting authority, and making wise decisions when choosing friends. Traveling to dozens of city venues in the US and Canada, *American Son* is more than a play - it's a movement!

### ***Jesus Christ Superstar***

Audiences can celebrate the Easter holiday with one of the most powerful musicals in Broadway history, *Jesus Christ Superstar!* Appealing to both theatergoers and concert music fans, this production will pay tribute to the historic 1971 Billboard Album of the Year while creating a modern world stage that is fresh and inspiring. Featuring award-winning music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Tim Rice, *Jesus Christ Superstar* is set against the

backdrop of extraordinary events during the final weeks of the life of Christ as seen through the eyes of Judas Iscariot. Reflecting the rock roots that defined a generation, the legendary score includes "I Don't Know How to Love Him," "Gethsemane," "What's the Buzz," and "Superstar." Television, film, and Broadway legend Ben Vereen will direct the concert production of this musical for which he received his first Tony Award nomination over 50 years ago. BITH's blockbuster production promises to dazzle younger generations with iconic melodies, powerful lyrics, and novel staging.

### ***End of the Rainbow: The Movie***

Broadway in the Hood also includes *End of the Rainbow* in its

spring showcase in partnership with the Las Vegas Chapter of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). Like the company's first short movie, *The French Defense*, this film will be written by BITH students and produced by the company. The poignant drama about a young man's journey of discovering his identity and sexuality will feature BITH family members, with all filming and editing completed in Las Vegas.

### ***Once on This Island***

*Once on This Island* is presented in April and May in partnership with the Rainbow Theatre Company at West Charleston Heights. This coming-of-age one-act creation - with music by Stephen Flaherty and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens - deals with issues of race, colorism, and class. The beauty and power of a myth drawn from the culture of the Caribbean are brought to life in this lush Tony Award-winning musical. Storytelling, African rhythms, and native instruments weave the tale of Ti Moune, a fearless peasant girl in search of her place in the world and ready to risk it all for love. Guided by mighty island gods, she sets out on a remarkable journey to reunite with the man who has captured her heart - all in a timeless testament to theater's unlimited possibilities.

### ***The Prom***

The company lights up the summer stage in June with *The Prom*, the joyous 2018 Broadway hit *New York Magazine* called "smart and



*Above: Broadway in the Hood wows audiences in the Troesch Theatre*

big-hearted,” and *The New York Times* declared a Critic’s Choice. Winner of the 2019 Drama Desk Award for Best Musical, the comedy spotlights four Broadway actors lamenting their days of fame and searching desperately to re-establish their lives in the entertainment world. They stumble upon a fascinating opportunity to help a lesbian student make it to the prom with her girlfriend in conservative Edgewater, Indiana. From the creative team that turned out *The Book of Mormon*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *Elf* comes a show that *The New York Times* says “makes you believe in musical comedy again.” A film adaptation followed on Netflix in 2020. *The Prom* is proud to partner with The Center of Southern Nevada on this whacky comedy with a serious message.

*Below: BITH performers and Wayne Newton at The Smith Center’s 5th Anniversary Celebration*



## ***Little Shop of Horrors***

To highlight Domestic Violence Month, Broadway in the Hood partners with Safe Nest, The Center of Southern Nevada, Shade Tree, and Women Who Care to present the charming, kooky, and hilarious Broadway classic *Little Shop of Horrors*. Based on a campy cult horror film, this light-hearted production features florist shop assistant Seymour, girl-of-his-dreams Audrey, and his exotic plant that dines on human blood and flesh. With music in the style of early 1960s rock and roll, doo-wop, and early Motown by Alan Menken and lyrics by Howard Ashman, the musical premiered Off-Off-Broadway in 1982 and later was made into a film of the same name in 1986. Running from May to August, the final show in the star-studded 2023 season features a cast of Broadway veterans.

### **2023 Free Musical Theatre Summer Intensive**

The company's ten-week intensive musical theatre camp educates young cast members (ages 10-17) in drama, music, and dance. Broadway in the Hood is committed to cultivating the wealth of potential in today's youth, inspiring them to become leaders who enthusiastically and confidently share what they have learned in the arts with their surrounding community. Participants learn the discipline of what it takes to sustain the arts. BITH classes are taught by professionals and practicing artists who are highly quali-



*BITH Founder Torrey A. Russell*

fied in their areas of expertise. As mentors, they embrace new and innovative ways of teaching. As a result, the company's curriculum challenges students to see themselves as agents of change and inspiration.

### **Back to School Broadway Bash and Urban Theatre Series**

October marks the company's second annual "Back to School Broadway Bash," with a huge family-friendly production that appeals to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. The show features BITH's summer camp

students performing alongside guest artists and Broadway in the Hood alums. The company's Urban Theatre Series follows with pop-up performances from major Broadway productions and original shows written by people of color. These vibrant productions engage over 100 local youth across the Las Vegas Valley.

### **Producing a Celebration to Inspire the Next Decade**

"Looking ahead, we're thrilled to play an integral part in the revitalization of the City's Historic Westside," notes an excited Russell. "We're celebrating the future by



planning our own home with a theatre and educational complex as part of the local renaissance celebrating Black history and culture.

“Creating our own state-of-the-art home base in Las Vegas will allow the company to expand throughout Southern Nevada and the country - and we’re ready and anxious to move forward!

“In the meantime, the 2023 season is shaping up to be one of our best yet,” boasts Russell, “with a stellar lineup of productions that will appeal to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. From Broadway favorites to new and original works, the company will showcase the talents of professional actors, local artists, and community members.

“Broadway in the Hood’s ‘Big, Bussin’, Blockbuster Broadway Season’ has something for everyone!”

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## Broadway in the HOOD

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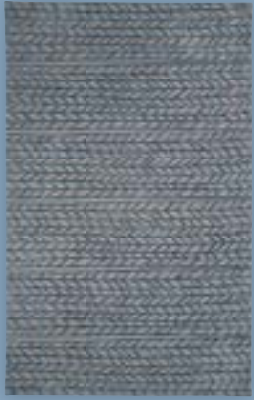
Contact [broadwayinthehood.org](http://broadwayinthehood.org) for details on all productions, classes, auditions, and tickets.

## We’re on a Mission

Broadway in the Hood believes that it takes a village to raise a child, and it takes a child to change the future. Working with homeless shelters, community centers, schools, nonprofit groups, and civic organizations supporting at-risk youth, BITH grows more resilient and successful every day.

The company strives to become the first national nonprofit youth theatre company committed to partnerships and collaborations that create programs, enhance in-school performances, provide training, and expand resources that are both affordable and accessible to the next generation of community leaders throughout the world. Our core values include...

- A fierce commitment to excellence, which drives every aspect of our work - whether on stage, in the boardroom, classroom, community shelter, rehearsal room, office, or shop.
- The effective and efficient use of all resources for optimal operational support.
- Collaboration and accountability in all our activities. Collaboration is vital to our collective success, and accountability ensures that our work is done in the most efficient manner possible.
- Thoughtful risk-taking is a critical factor in the company’s continued success since risk-taking ventures are inherent to any creative process.
- Organizational health produces a healthy, positive experience - where the opinions and concerns of all participants are valued and respected.
- Commitment to education and community is paramount. We believe live theatre offers a unique learning experience for both adults and children. And we aim to be good neighbors throughout the country and be an integral part of the cultural life in all the communities we serve.
- The company enthusiastically supports partnerships between artists and local institutions and organizations to engage youth and young adults as performers, writers, directors, technicians, audience members, students, and teachers in the development of our works.
- Above all, everyone at Broadway in the Hood agrees to put the needs of the whole above those of any individual. Exceptional effort is the norm - with the pursuit of excellence at all times based on the knowledge that we all succeed together!



# wander in wonder



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# charity

## Sally Pera - the Dancing Queen of Charity

By Joan S. Peck

*H*ow does someone grow up on a cattle ranch without electricity or running water and become an urban planner, mentor, ballroom dancing enthusiast, and a top-notch fundraiser? Ask Sally Pera.

“My grandparents were homesteaders in Colorado. I grew up in an environment where everybody helped everybody, and you didn’t question it. My father was committed to education and did the school board thing because of his sense of duty. Although he didn’t have time for it, he made the time. I was a cowgirl, and the cowboy culture takes care of each other because you can’t do it alone. So interest in helping others was role-modeled for me.”

After raising her children, Sally spent 13 years connecting Silicon Valley executives as CEO of the Association for Corporate Growth Silicon Valley before stepping down in 2017. “ACG was a labor of love. I have pretty suc-

cessful children. I decided that the world had helped them a lot, and being in Silicon Valley, they were in the right place at the right time. I thought I could use ACG to help younger people reach the next level. It was a place where you knew you could get help.”

Sally retired to Las Vegas in 2017, which did nothing to stop her from forging ahead with her behind-the-scenes work for causes and charities in town, raising funds for Three Square, Green Our Planet, and Friends of the Nevada State Museum, among others. The ballroom dancing devotee has since joined several advisory boards, including those of cannabis technology companies Phylos and Vivara Pharmaceuticals.

“Phylos is fascinating. It’s pure science and agriculture, developing updated seeds for optimal cannabis growth. They can separate the male and female marijuana plants, and growing time can be done almost instantaneously,



increasing return on investment. I have great hopes for it.”

Vivara started using hemp-based CBD [cannabidiol] exclusively for pharmaceutical remedies and has now evolved into an innovative, science-driven biopharma and MedTech company. “I love it. This whole cannabis thing came from a CEO’s international search who contacted me. I’ve had friends survive cancer on cannabis, so I

believe it is wonderful for those who use it to heal.”

In 2018, Sally formed the 32 Club to help fund the Traveling Trunk Program at the Nevada State Museum and their delivery to Clark County Schools. This program for secondary school students provides rented trunks full of resources and meets curriculum requirements for students to experience a sensory history-related environment through touch, tech, sound, and sight. The original cost for a round-trip delivery was \$32. There are approximately 15 women for each gathering, and the supporter donates \$32 each time they meet. Amazingly, over its four-year existence, 32 Club has brought in nearly \$50,000, highlighting Sally’s talent for fundraising.

What drew Sally to become involved in the Traveling Trunk initiative? “The 30 Educational Traveling Trunks are now booked a year in advance by individual teachers to use in the classroom for a few weeks. It made no sense to me that the museum did not have a budget priority to deliver them to teachers requesting them.”

Even though Sally’s schedule is busy, she still finds time to dance. “My parents met while ballroom dancing after the War, but I never danced until my youngest son was out of college, and I started taking an elderly neighbor who couldn’t drive to dance. I try to do it three times a week, and I’ve danced all over the world. It’s my kind of my therapy.”



*Damian Blackburn Las Vegas Ballroom Dancer and COT Blackpool winner, with Sally Pera. Photo courtesy of Sally Pera.*

Sally has been dancing for over 20 years, and her favorite out-of-country locations are Italy, Canada, and Argentina. “One of the many trips to Buenos Aires, I danced in the Malonges for 13 consecutive nights.”

Another love of hers ... cheering the NBA team her son Robert acquired in 2012, the Memphis Grizzlies. Robert founded Ubiquiti Networks in 2005, took it public in 2011, and acquired the Memphis Grizzlies a year later.

Sally’s love for the 32 Club and

its accomplishment is essential to her belief that “a charitable heart directed toward education strengthens the Las Vegas community we all love. There are now over 150 women involved in the 32 Club. Our goal for the future is a five-year plan to raise another \$50,000.”

There is no stopping the Dancing Queen of Charity ... thank God ... and you, Sally Pera.

For more information regarding the 32 Club please email [info@chiccompass.com](mailto:info@chiccompass.com).



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# MISS FILIPINA INTERNATIONAL 2023

## LAUNCHED IN BEVERLY HILLS

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By Janet Susan R. Nepales  
Photography by Gian Barbarona

Glamour, beauty, and glitz were all present at the media launch of the Miss Filipina International (MFI) beauty pageant 2023 under new ownership.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary and introducing the new owner of the MFI, the event was held at the Wilshire Garden of the Beverly Hilton Hotel, the new home of the MFI, and the venue of such glamorous events like the Golden Globes, the Oscars Governors Luncheon, the Emmys and the Grammys.

The event had a guest list that included a who's who in the beauty world and was decorated with balloons, tables with golden table runners, and flowers everywhere.

Margaret Gardiner, Miss Universe 1978, who made history by being the first South African woman to win the Miss Universe title and is now a journalist for The Sunday Times, arrived.



*The site of the media launch of the Miss Filipina International 2023, the Wilshire Garden of the Beverly Hilton Hotel.*

Maureen Christa Pojas Wroblewitz, the first Filipina to win "Asia's Next Top Model" in its fifth season and the first runner-up in the Miss Universe Philippines 2021 pageant, also graced the event.

Mark Anthony Nicolas, the two-time Emmy award-winning producer of "The Talk" show, also attended.

More than a hundred guests arrived for the media launch. At

the same time, two videos were shown to the guests – the vision of the Miss Filipina International 2023 and the introduction to the new owner of the pageant, Geoffrey Jimenez, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Worldwide Media Entertainment Corporation.

Key people behind the Miss Filipina International 2023 were introduced: Lisa Lew, MFI producer, former Binibining Pilipinas



*Above from left: Ronald Ramores, Lisa Lew, Geoffrey Jimenez, Janet Nepales, and Joey Galon*

International, and eight-time Emmy awardee for producing such shows as “Judge Judy” and other top-rated shows, spoke about the production of the pageant. Ronald “Ron” Ramores, director of Human Resources of GJ Group of Companies and Executive Coordinator of Miss Filipina International, spoke about the candidates. Joey Galon, a fashion and beauty expert who has served as Executive Director for local pageants in the Miss America, Miss USA, and Miss Universe, spoke about coaching and mentoring the candidates.

Other beauty queens and MFI titleholders, past and reigning, were also present: Blessa Ericha Figueroa (Reigning Miss MFI 2022), Kayla Usison (2nd runner up Miss MFI), Margaux Ugalino (3rd runner up Miss MFI), Ceejae Minell Delumen (Miss Teen MFI),

Alicia Chelsea Buendia (2nd runner up Miss Teen MFI), Sarah Nunnink, Miss Tourism 2018, Heather Casignia, 1st runner up MFI 2016, Kelly Ceniza, 1st runner up MFI 2017, and Caroline Luce, 2018 Miss Teen MFI semi-finalist.

Jimenez announced that MFI would move to a glamorous venue—the famous International Ballroom of The Beverly Hilton, home to many of the most prestigious awards shows and events in Beverly Hills, Hollywood, and Los Angeles. The black-tie dinner gala coronation night on Saturday, August 5, 2023, celebrates the beauty pageant’s 10th anniversary, which gives the biggest cash prizes.

The winner will receive a \$10,000 cash prize and a \$10,000 gift certificate from iSkin Beverly Hills.

The other prizes are a \$5,000 cash prize and a \$10,000 gift certificate from iSkin Beverly Hills for the first runner-up, who will be crowned Miss Tourism, and a \$2,500 cash prize and a \$5,000 gift certificate from iSkin Beverly Hills for each of the second, third and fourth runners-up.

Jimenez said, “We are excited to stage Miss Filipina International 2023 in the International Ballroom of The Beverly Hilton, an elegant venue befitting our search for the best and brightest Filipina who is beautiful inside and out. We will go all out to tap the Beverly Hills setting as a marvelous opportunity to showcase the culture, fashion, and vibrancy of the Philippines and its people through our candidates.”

Jimenez also stressed the uniqueness of the U.S.-based MFI

because it is open to candidates of at least one-fourth Filipino descent from around the world. Candidates must also be from ages 16 to 28.

An immigrant success story, Jimenez rose on his own merit due to hard work, discipline, and determination. Proud of his humble beginnings in Nueva Ecija, Philippines, Jimenez, the son of a farmer and a housewife, immigrated to America and, like many of his fellowmen, dedicated himself to the nursing profession.

Today, he is the CEO of more than 30 hospices and home health agencies across California and the Midwest. Along the way, he has become a Filipino American community leader, a philanthropist, a passionate advocate of Filipino talents, and a supporter of events that boost Philippine arts, fashion, and culture.

Jimenez brings his commitment to promoting the Philippines, the beauty and artistry of its people, to Miss Filipina International.



*Above Right: Miss Universe 1978 Margaret Gardiner attended the event.*

*Right: Geoffrey Jimenez is flanked by the Miss Filipina International titleholders.*





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# TRENDING THE LAS VEGAS REAL ESTATE MARKET

By Brian G. Thornton  
Photography courtesy of AVIA Media Group

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If you follow trends, then much of what you're about to read may be familiar to you. If you are a homeowner looking to relocate, trade up or downsize in the next few months to a year, it may make sense to refresh what you thought you knew about design trends.

Trends are significant because they change by the minute in most markets. Trends matter because they are a barometer of progress. They allow us to connect with people in real time. Imagine reviewing a trendless history, as it would be nearly impossible with no visible progress. We would be mired in sameness. Images of older homes with wood paneling, Formica countertops or sheet vinyl flooring in the kitchen, formal living, dining, and family rooms, pastel-colored ceramic tile in the bathrooms, and twin closets with bi-pass doors in the Master Bedroom. These are all design trends that speak to an era long passed.

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Some common elements homebuyers are looking for in small, medium, and large home price segments are driving trends and the topic of this story. For this article, single-family homes only are considered. To further define the segments, we looked at lower-priced homes less than the \$350,000 range, \$350,000 - \$500,000 mid-range, and the upper-end luxury market. We focused on three trends: Kitchens, open concept plans, and because we are in Las Vegas and our outdoor space is an extension of our interiors, we looked at discussions regarding outdoor spaces, too. We visit these issues in the first series of articles, stories, and conversations and find some interesting trends.

## ISLAND LOVE

In an unscientific survey of real design professionals, local and national homebuyers lead and influence home buying, renovation, and design trends. Kitchens remain the geographic centroid and focus of any home. Kitchen islands are a comment and ubiquitous element that organize most food prep areas. The design and relationship to the entire house are key to how most modern families function at any price point.

The homemaker wanted to be a part of the conversations during meal prep. Where feasible, walls were removed, and a pass-thru from the kitchen to the dining room was installed. As formal

dining rooms and living rooms evaporated, the open plan concept or open concept became very popular. Architects, designers, and builders began with a clean sheet of paper and combined living-dining and family rooms. The result was the GREAT ROOM. That pulling back of the curtain meant that kitchens, usually hidden away, were now front and center. The ugly appliances and workhorse utilitarian equipment needed also to be pretty and not just functional. Gone are the casual wood cabinets and premium woods, often replaced by European lacquered flat panel or Shaker style doors for a "cleaner" less fussy look. Pressure then focused on lighting, storage, and the backsplash material.



The kitchen functions as a gathering place, and the food prep and entertaining space needs to breathe.

### **BREATHING ROOM**

Having enough interior space to function as a family or an individual is a luxury in and of itself. Years ago, inventive home buyers began deconstructing houses. The open concept not only applied to interiors but extending the interior into the outdoors and private yards has catapulted trends toward ultimate indoor-outdoor living.

Why stop here? As the technology evolved and we wanted more than visual access to outdoor

space, the smaller sliding glass and French doors became obsolete. Now with updated HVAC systems and efficient climate control “smart” systems, homeowners want the line between the interior and exterior to blur, if not disappear altogether. When properly planned, sliding glass doors now means sliding and stacking into the wall or a pocket. Branded accordion and folding doors mean you can connect seamlessly with your outdoors. Outdoor dining, cooking, and, if space allows,

a pool and activity-laden rear yards are the design trends owners seek.

### **ZEN SANCTUARY**

“My home is my sanctuary” is an old adage that still rings true. With changing family structures in working and schooling habits following the pandemic, just being home is not enough. Many people are seeking a retreat and are making the Owner’s Suite their sanctuary. Isolated from

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*“My home is my sanctuary”  
is an old adage that still rings true.*

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other bedrooms, they sometimes are even on a separate level of multi-story homes. Behind the bedroom door, owners are recreating their favorite hotel suite experiences and rooms upwards of 300 SF. A separate sleeping chamber includes fireplaces, a breakfast bar, lounging, and TV areas. The adjoining ensuite luxury five-piece bath, lots of natural light, a steam spa, soaking tubs, and a large multi-spray shower. Those with even more square footage and budgets have separate toilet compartments, too.

## TRENDING

Our design article was thought to take a first-quarter 2023 snapshot of real estate design trends

ahead of the April to October buying market. Why should we only care about what the industry thinks when we have real-time experts in and around the industry to help us navigate trends? I thought our readers might find it more interesting if I offered more than my professional design opinion but invited others to discuss a few design trends that we see continuing in 2023. I recently contacted a few realtors and industry professionals to discuss the common thread that drives industry trends for home buyers.

Clea Jones-Burpee is a business owner and savvy realtor with Paradigm Realty in Las Vegas. Sina Harris, of Macken Realty, lives in Fort Lauderdale, along with her

builder husband Mike of Good News Development, a frequent Vegas visitor planning to buy here. We also spoke with Stacie Young, ASID, Owner of Innovative Kitchens, LLC, a custom cabinet company. For someone who sees it all, Aeon Jones is a professional photographer and owner of AVIA Media Group, a real estate design and Photography Company.

What we found was no matter what the price range, Kitchens and Baths, Master Bedrooms, or Owner's Suites, and particularly in the Las Vegas market, outdoor amenities ranked high up on the list of home trends at every price point.

## LOWER-PRICED RANGE HOMES

**Stacie Young** “Currently, in the Las Vegas market, there is very little available for \$250,000 and less; nationwide, there may be more inventory in this budget. As a starter home, my clients want the most “Bang for their buck.” Although an open-concept floor plan may be desirable, homeowners can seldom invest in removing walls at this budget. This puts the focus front & center with the designer as they are now challenged to create an open feel by incorporating smaller-scale appliances and furnishings so that the smaller footprint is not overtaken by huge items. Sometimes, just by eliminating a peninsula and incorporating an island on wheels, we can make the space feel more open without breaking the budget.”

**Sina Harris** “I just recently read an article from NAR that stated first-time home buyers are vanishing due to high-interest rates and inflation with home prices. The first-time home buyer’s market dropped to 26% over the past year. In the past first-time home buyers made up 40% of the home-buying market. For the past 2 to 3 years, this has impacted first-time home buyers and buyers who want to upgrade or relocate. Las Vegas is still one of the more affordable cities in the country that many buyers from all over the country are moving to. I think due to the state of the economy and real estate market, buyers’ expectations have lowered.”

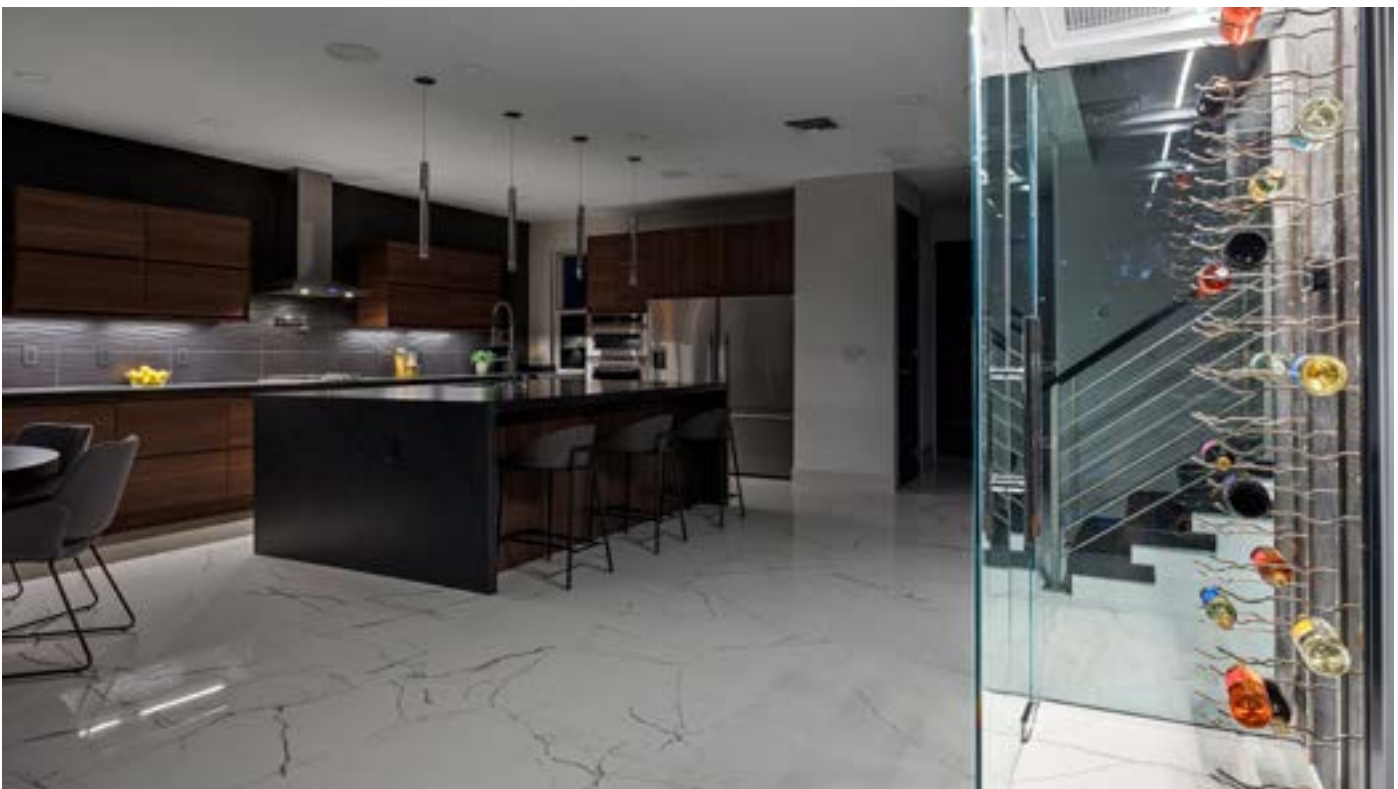
**Clea Jones-Burpee** “Buyers searching for homes priced at \$250,000 or below are typically first-time homeowners prioritizing affordability above all else. In the

price range, it is also common for investors to purchase these homes and renovate them by replacing features such as flooring and appliances with popular options like light gray or neutral painted walls, laminate, grey (imitation plank wood) flooring, and stainless-steel appliances. These renovated homes are then sold at a higher price point for a profit. This practice is frequently observed in homes within this price range.”

When asked why she commented on the starter-priced homes, Jones-Burpee responded, “I answered the first paragraph because I get this price point request all day long! Typically, from investors looking to flip.”

## MID-PRICED RANGE HOMES

**Sina Harris** “Home buyers in the range of \$250k to \$500K,





currently in the Las Vegas area, can still find homes with 2 or 3 garages, some with pools, and decent square footage (SF) ranging between 1500 SF. to 2100 SF. and sometimes larger. The buyers in this price range are looking for homes with a laundry room, adequate storage space, updated lighting, modern kitchens, Energy Savers windows, and outdoor space."

**Stacie Young** "This budget is probably where the vast majority of homes are in the Las Vegas Market. In the \$350,000 - \$500,000 budget, homeowners sometimes have extra budget to allocate some of the following items: Custom cabinetry, Built-in appliances, Open concept floor plans which may include removing non-load bearing walls, pools, water smart turf, and even outdoor kitchens. Typically, these homes range from 3-5 bedrooms and are sometimes even suited with an ensuite bath for each bedroom. Almost always, these homes will boast a beautiful powder bath where we will typically install a wall-mounted vanity or floating countertop with mood lighting and luxurious finishes to make the guests feel pampered."

## LUXURY AND UPPER-END MARKET

**Sina Harris** "Luxury home buyers still can find properties with more options. Luxury buyers are seeking open floor plans, large, spacious kitchens, finished outdoor spaces, water features (pools, spas, fountains, etc...), and technically

updated or smart homes for properties priced in the \$750K plus range."

**Stacie Young** commented this is where most of her clientele falls. "The luxury market of \$500,000 plus is where most of my clients fit. In this budget, homeowners have the ability to remove walls making their space open concept even if the walls are load-bearing. We also find these homeowners removing existing doors and windows and upgrading to folding or retractable window walls. High-end Custom cabinetry, built-in appliances, and luxurious shower and bath spaces are a must at this price point. These homeowners even renovate their homes to be smart homes, including but not limited to solar power, lightscapes, sound systems, security, smart controlled thermostats, and even smart controlled plumbing & tankless water heaters. Typically, these homes have 5+ bedrooms, almost always have ensuite baths, and of course, their own walk-in closets."

In summary, these trends and more will likely continue, especially as green and streamlined living is also gaining momentum. Informed home buyers will be rewarded for doing their homework and learning trends.

*Brian Thornton holds a Bachelor of Architecture and has practiced architecture, interior design, and luxury design for over four decades. He also taught Architectural Styles to Real Estate Agents as a CEU course in Maryland.*



**Aeon Jones, Owner  
AVIA Media Group**  
*Photo by Avia Media Group*



**Clea Jones-Burpee, Realtor  
Paradigm Realty, Inc.**  
*Photo by Chloe Jones*



**Sina Harris, Realtor  
Macken Realty**  
*Photo by Radiant Reflections*



**Stacie Young, Owner  
Innovative Kitchens, LLC**  
*Photo by Cambria*

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# ECHO & RIG BUTCHER & STEAKHOUSE 2.0

## Now Open at The District at Green Valley

By Elaine & Scott Harris  
Photography courtesy of Echo & Rig

Chef Sam Marvin, Owner and Executive Chef of Echo & Rig Butcher & Steakhouse celebrates 11 years at Tivoli Village. Over the years, it has become an iconic place to brunch, dine, meet friends for happy hour, and furnish prime cuts of your favorite protein at the butcher shop. Building on that success, Echo & Rig has opened in Henderson

with their second Vegas location in The District at Green Valley Ranch, bringing the world-class quality beef paired with curated cocktails and a rotating butcher shop.

It's all in the name of Echo & Rig, offering a fascinating story. Echo honors the nymph who masterfully distracted the queen for Zeus,

though she was ultimately caught and made only to repeat. Rig showcases the power of humanity. While this is an abstract story, Chef Marvin interprets it with the pairing of cuts of steaks sourced from purpose-driven farming partners from around the world, including Cape Grim in Tasmania and Creek Stone in Kansas.

Like its sister in Tivoli Village, the updated "Echo & Rig 2.0" is an authentic classic steakhouse in every sense of the word, bringing a neighborhood butcher shop to Henderson. Entering the front door, the butcher shop is to the immediate left featuring an exhibition-demonstration area with several large open glass meat lockers, including dry-aged cases and vertical displays.

Not only is the butcher shop an attention grabber, but to the entrance right, you can't help but be drawn over to the conversational 45-seat circular bar (surrounded by green velour drapes that can close into a private area). The cocktails are front and center here. Renowned mixologist, Tony Abou-Ganim, partnered with Chef Sam to create bespoke



cocktails, martinis, and signatures such as the Tony Negroni, Tennessee Highball, and the E&R Aged Manhattan. It also offers an Old School Highball Club Service, where guests may choose their spirit, mixer, and garnish.

The restaurant features an 8,000-square-foot interior, seats 130 in the dining room, and guests can also enjoy the 800-square-foot outdoor terrace and dine Al fresco under the glimmering lights of The District. Brass chandeliers accenting the deep emerald and grey color scheme, rich paneled flooring, air plants, furniture by Prouve, and white leather banquet tables complement the stunning artwork, all conceptually designed by Sam Marvin.

*Pro Tip: Visit the Instagramable bathroom with Chef's inspirations, musicians, celebrities, places, and more. Check out the stunning hand-painted columns that hold a story of Marvin's love of art history.*

Marvin has been a big supporter of the community. The local artist, Mario Basner, provided the wall decor, whose black and white prints highlight the butcher theme. The restaurant's focal point includes three tall structural pillars, artistically designed by celebrated artist Jayson Atienza. With clients such as Nike and Givenchy, Atienza's acclaim has beautifully translated, illustrating the energy and vibe of Echo & Rig with pops of vibrant colors and a finished texture mimicking the marbling of steak.



"Another enhanced feature at this location includes a custom grill area which will include a wood-fired oven, a charcoal smoker, and two wood-fire grills with grates that can be raised or lowered," explained Marvin. "The grills will be fueled with red oak burning with fire flavor."

Regulars will recognize favorites such as portobello fries, steak tartare, drunken goat sandwiches, and other steak classics. "Some items are unique to the Henderson location, like, Iberico Pork Secreto, served with garlic pea tendrils and topped with pineapple

jalapeno chutney. Another savory addition is the Pastured Raised Chicken cooked in cast iron with crispy skin and herbs chicken jus, served with red wine grits. The Lamb Porterhouse Chops are served with pee wee potatoes, fennel, and onions and topped with dried apricots and violet mustard," added Marvin.

"We have a lot more fun stuff here, new cuts of beef and more. For example, you may select at least two or three types of beef, including wagyu, barley-finished, grass-fed, corn-finished bone-in-cuts, porterhouse, and toma-

hawk. That's the fun part!" he added as we toured the restaurant. "When Echo & Rig at Tivoli Village opened 11 years ago, restaurants in Vegas were not yet offering cuts like the ribeye cap or the tomahawk. We plan to stay ahead of the curve by offering several options for different cuts, depending on guests' preference," continued Marvin.

Exploring more of the menu, guests can select specific cuts of meat from different farms and ranches at various price points, which is unique. Taking a seat, the classic Caesar Salad is a





great way to begin your dining experience. The anchovies and sourdough croutons are a plus, making this Caesar tease the tastebuds. The best steakhouses are not all just about fine cuts of meat. Why not Sea Bass? Marvin's Sea Bass a la Plancha deserves a place at the table. Wild Mediterranean bass with perfectly crispy skin and rich Castelevtrano olive oil dipping sauce is an empire of taste and presentation. When at Echo & Rig, why not indulge? The Bone in Tomahawk, medium rare, with seven classic sauces from Blue Cheese, Bearnaise to Chimichurri, is an unforgettable experience.

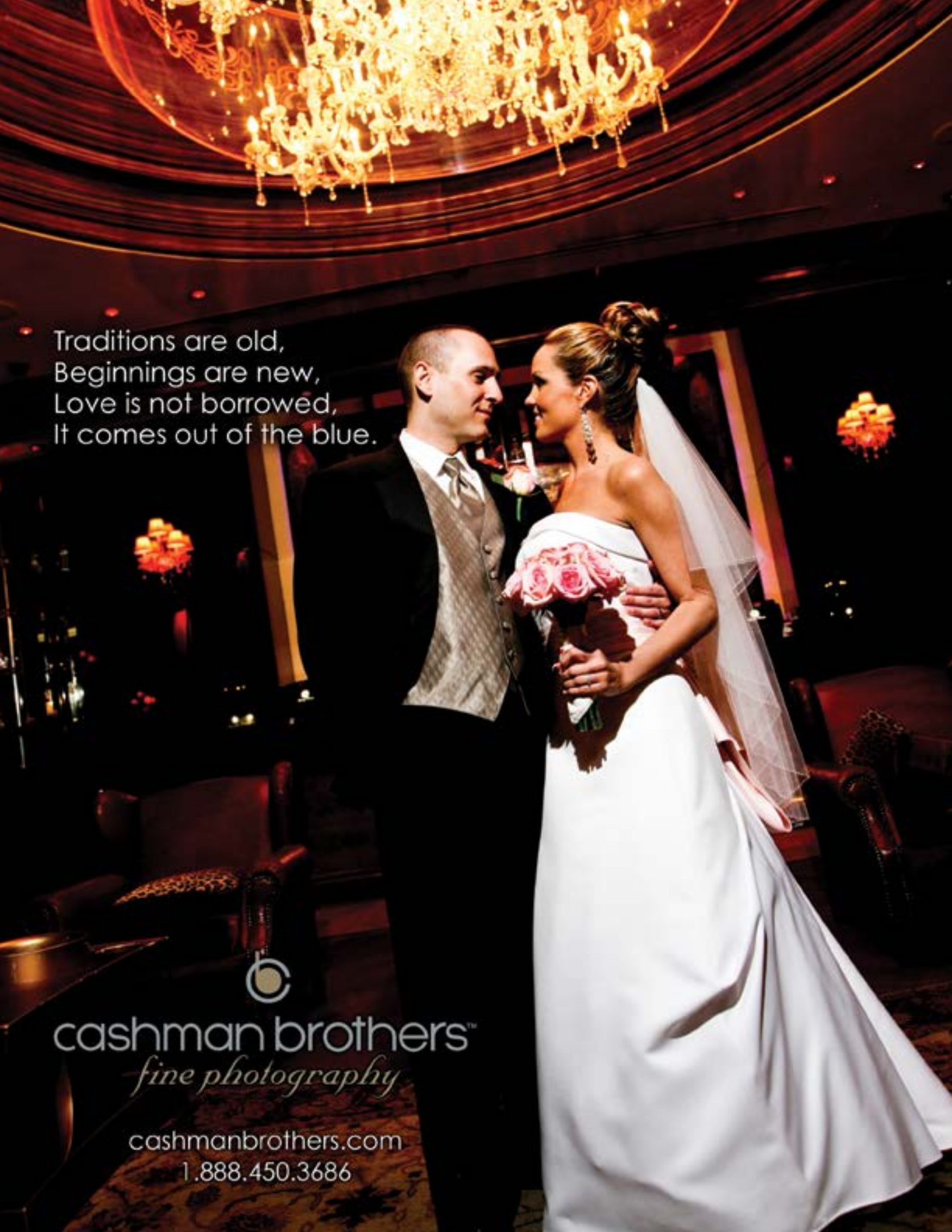
*Pro Tip: Before exiting, go to the Butcher shop and continue your culinary journey home. Pick up some of your best-loved cuts and a bone for fido.*

"Echo & Rig is known for their unique concept and incredible food at their first location in Tivoli Village. We are thrilled to welcome the restaurant with open arms at The District at Green Valley Ranch! We are confident they'll be a great addition to our center and fit right into the Henderson community," says Julissa Breslin, Marketing Director at The District at Green Valley Ranch.

Being no stranger to Echo & Rig, we value the quality of a neighborhood steakhouse and butcher shop. Its culinary experiences feature best-in-class steaks and impeccable ingredients. Now the opposite side of the Vegas Valley can partake in the finest selection of cuts, finishes, and entrees. Echo & Rig continues to capture a sophisticated, relaxed ambiance with great culinary offerings.

Visit Echo & Rig online at: [echoandrig.com/henderson](http://echoandrig.com/henderson)





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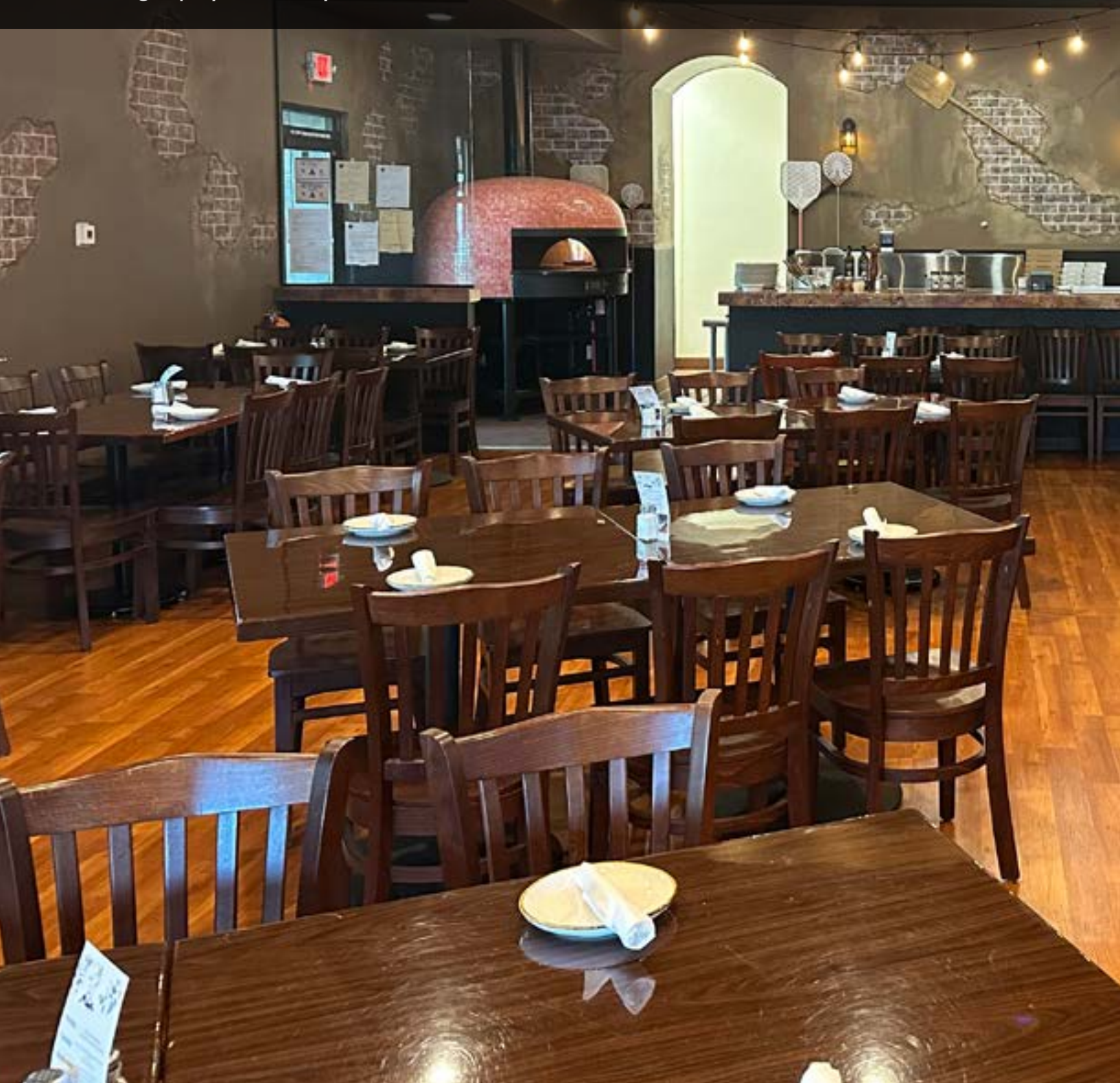
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# CHILL BAR & GRILL

## Brings That Vibe to Las Vegas

Article by Debbie Hall

Photography courtesy of Chill Bar & Grill





For more than 45 years, those craving Italian dishes would dine at Siena Italian Authentic Trattoria and Deli. Not ready to rest on his laurels, owner and Chef Giancarlo Bompola has extended his passion for a new venue, Chill Bar & Grill.

"I love the food and beverage industry as much as I love creating amazing food. The opportunity recently came to purchase First Bistro, and since it was just down the street from me, I knew it was the right place," explains Chef Bompola.

"I had an idea to create a 'chill' spot with a happy hour to hang out with friends. I wanted to develop a new, exciting, creative lunch and dinner menu with American and Mediterranean cuisine. Since we are past the pandemic fears and restrictions, the food industry is booming again, and we are glad to be a part of it."

By reinventing American Mediterranean cuisine, the Neapolitan-style pizza baked in the brick pizza oven creates the perfect mood to hang out, share the food, and enjoy.

The Pizza Prosciutto is a new take on pizza combining toppings of passata tomato sauce, fresh mozzarella, burrata prosciutto, and

*At Left: Chill Bar & Grill*

basil leaf. Pizza Fig Balsamic blends sweet and savory flavors using Balsamic vinegar with fresh ricotta cheese, caramelized onion, figs, and gorgonzola.

Appetizers (as a first course or to share) include a Mediterranean favorite —Calamari Fritti, served with spicy homemade marinara sauce.

Truffle Parmesan Fries brings delicious tastes with house-cut French fries tossed in truffle garlic sauce, sauteed mushrooms, and a parmesan crisp.

Goat Cheese, seasoned, breaded, and deep fried, served with garlic aioli sauce, is another twist on the menu.

"I have often received inspiration from my younger days growing up in Italy; I remember the smells from the kitchen, the tastes of the cuisine, my family's recipes," says Chef Bomporra. "I still go after modern trends in food and find my own way to cook and create them. Something on the menu will always appeal to the guests. We have something for everyone."

Gluten-free choices include Gluten Free Popeye Spinach Salad, made with spinach, arugula, artichokes, heirloom cherry tomatoes, walnuts, gorgonzola, and figs in an orange vinaigrette.

For sandwich lovers, Bison Burger provides lean protein served on pancetta and topped with lettuce,

heirloom tomato, provolone, and gorgonzola cheese.

The Milan-born chef impresses with his pasta dishes, such as Paccheri Boscaiola, taking mushrooms, pancetta, onion, and peas in a brandy cream sauce as a delectable flavor. Gnocchi Al Gorgonzola with Shrimp is delicately coated with a creamy gorgonzola sauce topped with roasted garlic cherry tomatoes.

Forte Dishes fills full dishes with fantastic flavor pallets. Share Grilled Chicken Kabob, a Mediterranean chicken kabob served with rice, grilled zucchini, and tomatoes, or Shrimp Skewers with grilled shrimp, lemony couscous, and grilled vegetables.



Indulge in an appetizing Salmon Alla Griglia, fresh Atlantic grilled salmon served with sauteed vegetables.

Fresh homemade Italian desserts will tempt with Tiramisu, homemade ladyfingers soaked with coffee and then layered with mascarpone cream and cocoa powder. Their Gluten Free Flourless Chocolate Cake is a perfectly decadent cake of silky cocoa.

A chance to Chill is happy hour with reduced pricing on drinks and appetizers from 3 to 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. until closing daily. "This is not a classic bar where you order a drink and go; we are promoting an experience of unique craft drinks combined with great Mediterranean fresh cuisine, where different cultures are embraced," says the chef.

There are unique specialty cocktails along with beer, wine, hard ciders, seltzers, and spirits. Try The Bronz Cocktail, The Casa Ginger Mint Paloma, The Coconut Mojito, The Nevada Cocktail, and the Dark Rum Yaka Hula. Traditional cocktails include the Old-Fashion, Strawberry Daiquiri, Lemon Drop Martini, and Long Island Ice Tea. Live entertainment adds to the atmosphere, along with the incredible food and drink.

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*Top: Chill Bar & Grill garlic parmesan truffle fries.*

*Above: Chill Bar & Grill pizza.*

# ARE FOUR WOMEN FATED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Can fate really change someone's life? Tiffany Darling has her doubts when she's picked up off the street and asked to become one of the Angels out of the Dark. She and the other angels have to bond together to help other women escape their circumstances of working on the streets. Can they do it?

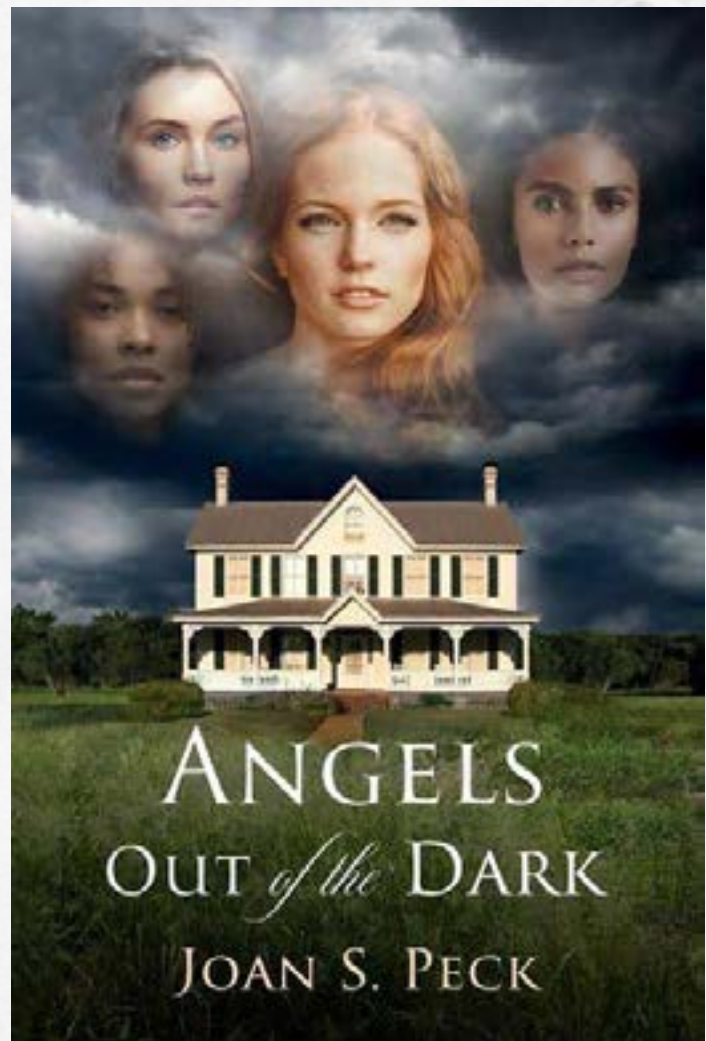
This is an empowering story for every woman who has come to a fork in the road of her life where even a simple choice becomes crucial. You will see yourself in all the angels and rejoice in knowing you are one of them.

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Are you aware that four to five people go missing EACH day here in Las Vegas? Do you know that only 60% of murders country-wide ever get solved? Have you thought about the fact that at this time sexual abuse and human trafficking has reached the proportions of another pandemic? Do you know the signs of sexual abuse among children? How can you help?

Angels Out of the Dark is a haunting story about four women who have survived their abusive backgrounds and asked to help others out of their trapped way of living. It is about them pulling together with the aid of their Samaritan benefactors to learn that they have the power to change their lives. It is a story about redemption, hope, and the goodness of healthy love. It is a story everyone should read to become kinder toward others less fortunate.

This book is dedicated to Lena Walther of the Awareness is Prevention (AIP) non-profit and all the other non-profits and people who are doing what they can to make us more aware of human sex trafficking. They demand our attention to insist on better laws to end sex trafficking and to learn the signs of sexual abuse so that we may stop a person from being taken or wooed to become a part of the human sex trafficking schemes so prevalent today. We honor and thank you for your efforts to make a safer, better world for us all ... especially for those who are defenseless.



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**NEW  
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DESIGNER: DANNY NGUYEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



# HEART-FELT FASHIONS AT THE NEW YORK FASHION WEEK

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Article by David Tupaz  
Photography by Mark Gunter

Art Hearts Fashion is the leading platform dedicated to bringing innovative designers and artists to the forefront of fashion week. Our coast-to-coast contemporary events get the most renowned designers and the sharpest up-and-coming emerging designers to the runway in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and beyond.

New York Fashion Week presented a fresh new approach to evening wear, as seen through the Nguyen, Bendana, and Mendez collections.

The variety of textures and attention to detail captured a touch of Old Hollywood in their collections. Colors in deep earth tones with a touch of unexpected color accent as accessory, the classic black and white mix, and different shades of white dominated the runway.

Images by Top Fashion runway photographer, Mark Gunter.



DESIGNER: DANNY NGUYEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



**NEW  
YORK  
FASHION  
WEEK**  
POWERED BY  
ART HEARTS FASHION



**NEW  
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FASHION  
WEEK**

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DESIGNER: PASSARELLAS X ERICK BENDAÑA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER

**NEW  
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**ART HEARTS FASHION**

**PASSARELLAS X ERICK BENDAÑA**



DESIGNER: PASSARELLAS X ERICK BENDAÑA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



**NEW  
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DESIGNER: WALTER MENDEZ  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER





**NEW  
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WALTER MENDEZ



DESIGNER: WALTER MENDEZ  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER

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DESIGNER: ANDRE SORIANO  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



# LONDON FASHION WEEK PAYS TRIBUTE TO FASHION AS ART

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Article by David Tupaz  
Photography by Mark Gunter

London Fashion Week, presented by House of Ikons this February, delivered a variety of inspirations from classic white evening looks by Andre Soriano, a diverse collection inspired by cultural heritage by the Love collection, and the sophisticated red

carpet gowns with rich detailing of embroidery and beading by Will Franco. Fashion seems to pay tribute to its elegance and dignified grace— like the days of old Hollywood when Style was respected, and fashion was adored and appreciated like Art.



DESIGNER: ANDRE SORIANO  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: ANDRE SORIANO  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: LOVE COLLECTION  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER





DESIGNER: LOVE COLLECTION  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: LOVE COLLECTION  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: WILL FRANCO  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER

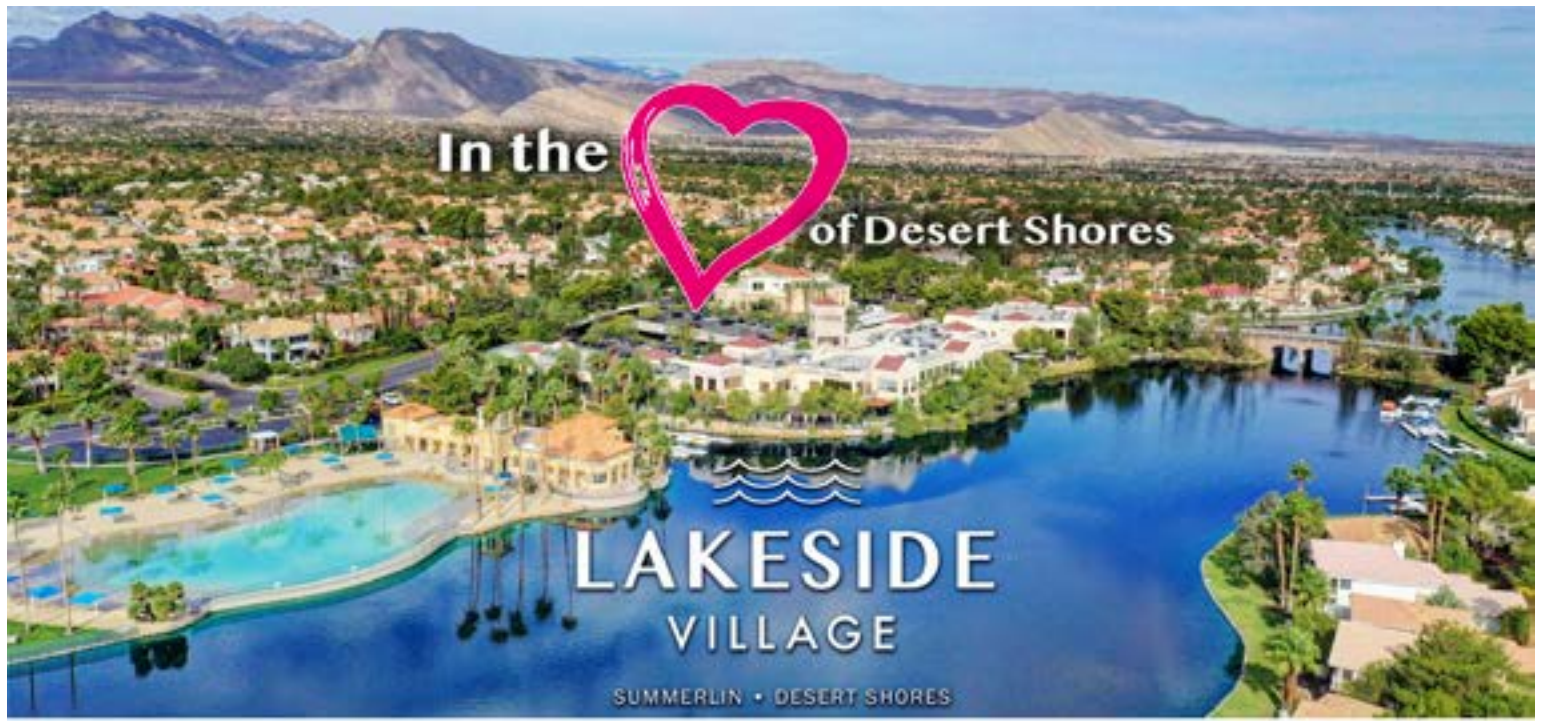


DESIGNER: WILL FRANCO  
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# WILL AMERICA FACE ANOTHER BANKING CRISIS LIKE 2008?

By Joseph Amato

The answer to this question truly depends on the future actions of the Treasury Department, the FDIC, and the Federal Banking Committee, which currently controls our interest rates.

Were the failures of Silicon Valley and Signature Bank self-inflicted, due to executive mismanagement or greed, or a byproduct of the current fed policy?

There is a cause-and-effect dilemma in play here that needs to be fully understood.

Silicon Valley Bank was an enigma at its core, whereby the majority of its depositors were hedge funds, internet companies, and high-tech start-ups with assets of \$175 billion. Most of its customer accounts (well over 85%) held over \$250,000 in their respective bank accounts. In this case, the Silicon Valley Bank depository accounts were far above the FDIC deposit guarantee threshold of \$250,000.

The depository portfolio at Silicon Valley Bank is the inverse of most other lenders in the country, usually representing 80% of



their depositor accounts at under \$250,000 and less than 20% of their depositor accounts at over \$250,000.

Why is this important?

The federal government made a hasty decision within forty-eight hours of the Silicon Valley Bank's failure to rescue all depository accounts at \$250,000 and below through the usual activities of the FDIC depository guarantee limits and those above the \$250,000

limit through supplemental federal support. That was a welcome action by the hedge funds, internet companies, and high-tech start-ups overjoyed with the federal bailout. But at what cost to the taxpayers?

The first response from the White House was that they were going to use funds available to reimburse these excessive depository accounts from fees collected from the banking industry for future bank difficulties. It will be interest-



ing to see if billions of dollars are available to cover all Silicon Valley Bank depositor losses in this emergency banking account.

Subsequently, the Fed created the Bank Term Funding Program to offer banks, credit unions, savings associations, and other institutions with high-quality Treasury Notes, Agency Debt, and Mortgage-Backed Securities in their portfolio the ability to secure one-year term loans to ensure the ongoing liquidity of these institutions and avoid the fears associated with another bank failure.

The first thing that occurs when a bank is feared insolvent is a run on the bank by its depositors to withdraw the money in their accounts or transfer their money to another institution. Silicon Valley Bank had this occur on March 9th when rumblings of lack of li-

quidity were heard in the marketplace. Depositors began requesting their funds be withdrawn or transferred, and the bank did not have the cash on hand to honor their requests. As a result, around midday on March 10th, the bank closed operations completely.

Signature Bank faced the same dilemma on Friday, March 10th, when fears caused by the failure of Silicon Valley Bank spread rapidly, and a run of over \$10 billion in deposits occurred from its customer base of New York real estate operators, law firms, and cryptocurrency clientele. But the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank was not the only problem facing Signature Bank, one of only a handful of lenders that allowed customers to deposit crypto assets. [The first sign of an impending insurmountable problem was the collapse of FTX and the ensu-

ing plunge in crypto value.] Signature Bank shut down on Sunday, March 12th.

So, you may be asking, where was the cash, and what happened to the money collected in each depositor's account to put these institutions into this catastrophic predicament?

When depositors begin to withdraw large amounts of money for fear of bank failure, the bank has to sell its long-term Treasuries and securities purchased at a lower interest rate environment over the past several years at a loss to cover the withdrawals. The market value of these Treasuries and securities dropped sharply amid the high inflation and the Fed's rising interest rate environment, making it difficult to sell and cover the losses, thus exacerbating the liquidity crisis within the bank.





It may be in the best interest of the banking industry and the overall economy that the Fed begins to pause its aggressive campaign of raising interest rates to curb inflation. Doing so will allow the banks to build up liquidity in the marketplace as they start selling off Treasuries and securities purchased previously, and they must sell at a current loss. With all that said, the Fed may refuse to curb its quest to defeat inflation by increasing interest rates. However, they may respond accordingly by reducing the rate of increase from a half point to a quarter point.

The good news for the depositors at most U.S. banks and other financial institutions is that most banks and financial institutions have more than enough liquidity and available capital to offset any immediate “bank run” on deposit withdrawals. Although there is no

guarantee that the current anxiety will not spread, it appears that the risk of contagion is minimized each day we put Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank in the rear-view mirror.

For those who were not aware of the immense nature of these bank failures, here are the top three in U.S History:

1. Washington Mutual  
2008 – holdings at the time of loss were \$307 billion.
2. Silicon Valley Bank  
2023 – holdings at the time of loss were \$209 billion.
3. Signature Bank  
2023 – holdings at the time of loss were \$118 billion.

In our current banking system, the light speed that bad news can travel may sometimes be counterproductive and, most times,

injurious to those who fear losing their deposits in a troubled bank or financial institution. It is a possibility that the fears generated at Silicon Valley Bank were internal, causing a “bank run” that helped some of the larger depositors if they knew that the federal government would bail out all depositors at the bank. If this was the case, I hope those involved would be severely punished and not receive their deposits in total.

It is the responsibility of all banks, financial institutions, the Fed, and the Treasury to work in lock-step to maintain their respective portfolios to avoid liquidity issues, future panic, and any possible financial system manipulation for the benefit of a few. We cannot afford another crisis like 2008 that cost the taxpayers and injured the credibility of our financial system.



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# AN OSCAR® NIGHT TO REMEMBER

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By Janet Susan R. Nepales  
Photography courtesy of Janet Susan R. Nepales,  
Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA)

There was no slapping incident, no Tom Cruise, and no James Cameron at the 95th Oscars night. But Michelle Yeoh *kung fu'd* and broke the glass ceiling. Ke Huy Quan got emotional as he recalled his journey on a boat, a year in a refugee camp, and now an Oscar winner.

Daniel Kwan, one of the co-directors of Best Picture winner *Everything Everywhere All At Once*, gave tribute to his immigrant parents for giving him the gift of loving movies.

There were a lot of tears of joy, emotional acceptance speeches, and excited backstage meetings with the press.

That was how it looked at the 95th Academy Awards night last Sunday at the Dolby Theatre when Asian actors dominated, shattered ceilings, broke through doors once closed to them, and everybody unabashedly cried



with joy and happiness. You would, too, if you were Asian.

It was a historic evening indeed for Asians. A number of the winners, led by Michelle Yeoh, Ke

*Above: Ke Huy Quan at the 95th Oscars® on Sunday, March 12, 2023. Photo by Richard Harbaugh.*

Huy Quan, and The Daniels (directors Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert) of the absurdist comedy-drama *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, not only won but made history.

Golden Globe winner Yeoh, who won Best Actress in a Leading Role for her performance as Evelyn Wang in *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, became the first Asian woman and first Malaysian to take home this award. It was her first Oscar nomination. When asked backstage what it meant for Asian representation within the entertainment industry, Yeoh said, "This is actually a historical moment, and I have to thank The Academy for acknowledging, embracing diversity and true representation. "I think this is something we have been working so hard towards for a very long time, and tonight we freaking broke that glass ceiling. I Kung Fu'd it out and shattered it, and we need this because so many felt unseen, unheard. It's not just the Asian community. This is for the Asian community and anyone identified as a minority. We deserve to be heard and seen; we deserve equal opportunity so we can have a seat at the table. That's all we're asking for. Give us an opportunity, and let us prove we are worth it."

Asked whether there was a point in her life when she felt she had to step back from acting and what advice she would give to people who are afraid to take up space, the 60-year-old actress said, "You should never be afraid. If this is your passion and this is your love,



you have to stand up for yourself for what you believe in and want to do. I think that is what it is."

"I'm still here today. Finally, after 40 years, I got this. It just goes to show that we will ... we will win the battle. And that's what we're doing. So don't give up. Never give up. Because when you give up, then it's a loss. It's a total loss, right?"

"So, don't let anybody put you in a box. Don't let anybody say, oh, you are past your prime, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. No, because we are proud. We believe in what we do. We love what we do. So light that fire in your soul and stay on the path. Be-

*Above: Oscar® winner Michelle Yeoh attends the Governors Ball following the live ABC telecast of the 95th Oscars®. Photo by Kyusung Gong.*

lieve. Dare to dream. Because if you don't dream, it's impossible. Nothing is impossible. Look at me; I'm here."

The former Miss Malaysia dedicated her historic win to her 84-year-old mom. She said, "I have to dedicate this to my mom and all the moms in the world because they are really superheroes. Without them, none of us would be here tonight. She is 84, and I am taking this home to her."



*Above: Ke Huy Quan with the Oscar® for Actor in a Supporting Role, Michelle Yeoh with the Oscar® for Actress in a Leading Role, Brendan Fraser with the Oscar® for Actor in a Leading Role and Jamie Lee Curtis with the Oscar® for Actress in a Supporting Role backstage during the live ABC telecast of the 95th Oscars® at Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 12, 2023. Photo by Michael Yada.*

Asked backstage the best advice she received from her mother, Yeoh replied, “I think mothers are very important to all of us because, without them, none of us would be sitting in this room to start with. The most important thing is my mother has always instilled confidence in me. Taught me about love. Taught me about kindness and compassion. I’m not very, very good at that at times. The recent thing that she asked me to do is don’t wear pants to the Oscars. I think what mothers do is constantly remind you to be better. And they do it with love,

and they do it because they really want you to be better, so you will have a better life. And that, for them, is their ultimate goal.”

In her acceptance speech, Yeoh said, “For all the little boys and girls who look like me watching at home, this is a beacon of hope and possibilities. This is proof that dreams do come true. And ladies, don’t let anybody ever tell you that you are past your prime.”

A huge win for inclusion and representation indeed. Yeoh was

only the second Asian woman to be nominated in this category. Yeoh is the first openly Asian woman to receive the honor. [Merle Oberon, who earned a nod in 1935, passed herself as white and concealed the truth for the rest of her life.] Yeoh’s fellow nominees were Cate Blanchett, Michelle Williams, Ana de Armas, and Andrea Riseborough.

It took 21 years (since Halle Berry’s milestone triumph) for the second woman of color to win Best Actress and 95 years for the first Asian woman to get the Oscar statuette.

The other one to make history is Golden Globe winner Ke Huy Quan who won Best Actor in a Supporting Role in his first Oscar nomination for portraying Waymond Wang in *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. He is the first Vietnam native to receive the honor and only the second Asian since Haing S. Ngor to triumph in the category for *The Killing Fields* almost 40 years ago.

The 51-year-old actor, who appeared in *The Goonies* and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, also dedicated his award to his 84-year-old mom. “She’s at home watching,” he said in his acceptance speech. “Mom, I just won an Oscar!”

He continued, “My journey started on a boat. I spent a year in a refugee camp and somehow ended up here, on Hollywood’s biggest stage. They say stories like this only happen in the movies. I cannot believe it’s happening to



*Above: Jamie Lee Curtis, James Hong, Ke Huy Quan, Michelle Yeoh, Jonathan Wang, Stephanie Hsu, Daniel Kwan, and Daniel Scheinert pose backstage with their Oscars® during the live ABC telecast of the 95th Oscars® at Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 12, 2023. Photo by Michael Yada.*

me. This is the American dream.” The tearful Quan added, “I owe everything to the love of my life, my wife, Echo, who month after month, year after year, for 20 years, told me that one day my time would come. Dreams are something you have to believe in. I almost gave up on mine. To all of you out there, please keep your dreams alive.”

Asked backstage how it feels to win an Oscar with his real name instead of Jonathan Ke Quan, the name he used when he starred in *The Goonies* and *Indiana Jones*

and *the Temple of Doom*, Quan replied, “My birth name is Ke Huy Quan. And I remember when it got really tough; my manager told me that maybe, you know, it would be easier if you were to have an American-sounding name, and I was so desperate for a job that I would do anything. And it’s insane that I, at one point, would, you know, try a different name, not the name that was given to me. But it only shows you how desperate I was to try to make things different. So when I decided to get back into acting three years ago, the very

first thing I wanted to do was to go back to my birth-given name. Tonight to see Ariana (DeBose) open that envelope and say ‘Ke Huy Quan,’ that was a really, really special moment for me.

“And then, immediately, I was so emotional. But the first image that I had in my mind was my mom. My mom, who is the reason why I am in America, who is the reason why I have a better life, I have all these opportunities. As I said in my acceptance speech, she sacrificed so much. She had a great life where we came from, and she gave all that up so that all her children, there’s nine of us, and every single one of them is so grateful to my parents. I hope they are proud of me.”

Ke Huy Quan won against his fellow nominees, Brendan Gleeson, Judd Hirsch, Brian Tyree Henry, and Barry Keoghan.

Yeoh and Quan’s victories marked the first time in the history of the Oscars that two Asian actors (for the same movie) triumphed in a single year. It’s also unprecedented that they won for portraying Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese fluent parts.

Jamie Lee Curtis, who won Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her performance as Deirdre Beaubiedra in *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, thanked her castmates and moviegoers who have supported her all these years. It was also Curtis’s first Oscar nod. She said in her acceptance speech, “To all of the people who have supported the genre movies that I

have made for all of these years, the thousands and hundreds of thousands of people, we just won an Oscar together.”

She also gave a shoutout to her late parents, actors Janet Leigh and Tony Curtis. “My mother and father were both nominated for Oscars in different categories. I just won an Oscar.”

Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, collectively known as The Daniels, won Best Director, Best Picture, and Best Original Screenplay in their first Oscar nominations in all the categories. Scheinert thanked his parents “for not squashing my creativity when I was making really disturbing horror films or really perverted comedy films or dressing in drag as a kid, which is a threat to nobody.”

Both 35 years old, The Daniels were the youngest in the group of director nominees that included Steven Spielberg (76), Todd Field (59), Martin McDonagh (52), and Ruben Ostlund (48).

Kwan, who became the third winner of Asian descent to win a Best Director award after Chloe Zhao and Bong Joon-ho, said, “Scheinert is my confidence. He is the person who told me I was a storyteller before I believed it.” Kwan is also the first of Chinese descent to win (with Scheinert) the Best Original Screenplay.

Kwan said in his acceptance speech for Best Director, “We are all products of our context; we are all descendants of something or someone. I want to acknowl-



*Above: Oscar® nominees Ke Huy Quan and Steven Spielberg with Kate Capshaw during the live ABC telecast of the 95th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood. Photo by Dana Pleasant.*

edge my context – my immigrant parents – my father, who fell in love with movies because he needed to escape the world and thus passed that love of movies onto me. My mother, who is a creative soul who wanted to be a dancer, actor, and singer but could not afford the luxury of that life path and then gave it to me.”

When he accepted the Oscar for Best Picture, Kwan said, “This is for my dad, who, like so many immigrant parents, died young. And he is so proud of me not because of this (the Oscar statuette) but because we made this movie with what he taught me to do, which is...no one is more important than anyone else. And these weirdos right here (pointing at his beam-

ing cast and fellow creatives) supported me in doing that. Wang Da Zhang, memory eternal.”

Scheinert and Kwan are the third directing duo to win an Oscar. Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise won for *West Side Story* in 1962, and Joel and Ethan Coen won for *No Country for Old Men* in 2008.

And then there was the *RRR* movie’s “Naatu Naatu” song from India which won Best Original Song and became the first song from an Indian film to win an Oscar in this category. The song, which also won a Golden Globe, was composed by M.M. Keeravani and lyricist Chandrabose.

Filipina actress Dolly de Leon, the first Filipina actress to get a Golden Globe nod for her portrayal of Abigail in *Triangle of Sadness*, attended her first Oscar with some cast members of the film with Oscar-nominated director Ruben Ostlund (Original Screenplay, Directing).

De Leon looked sharp in a black Philosophy di Lorenzo Serafini suit accented by red Chris Habana jewels, red gloves by Vex clothing, and red Manolo Blahnik shoes. Before her trek to the red carpet, we asked De Leon what she looked forward to in her first Oscar journey.

De Leon replied, "Mostly, I'm so happy to be reunited with the cast, crew, producers, and our director Ruben. And to be able to share this very special and rare moment with them is mind-blowing. Nag-shoot lang kami two years ago, and now we'll be reunited in a place where we are recognized. It's a dream come true."

After the Oscar, De Leon told us, "It was a great way of reuniting with the cast and creative team of *Triangle of Sadness*. I've missed them so much and love them so dearly. This night served as our despedida, closing our journey with our film. It was the best way to end the wild ride." She said she was excited to talk to Sandra Oh, Allison Williams, and Jenny Slate at the Oscars.

Also, turning heads on the red carpet was no less than Nobel Peace Prize-winning Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai looking



*Above: Dolly De Leon arrives on the red carpet of The 95th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 12, 2023. Photo by Blaine Ohigashi.*





*Above: Malala Yousafzai arrives on the red carpet of the 95th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 12, 2023. Photo by Kyusung Gong.*

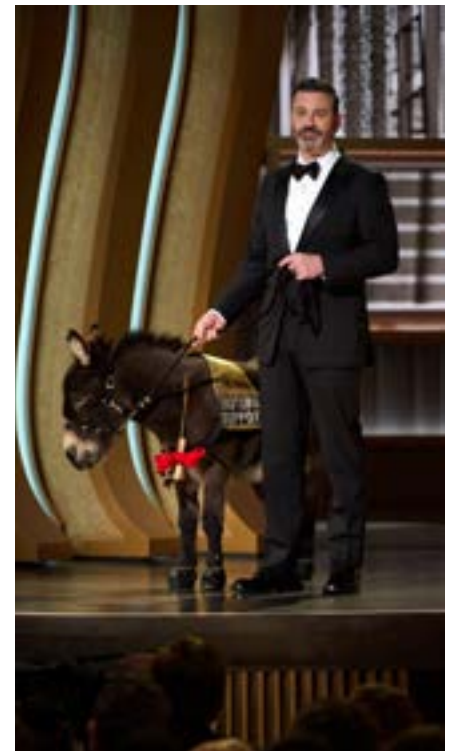
*Right: Jimmy Kimmel hosts the live ABC telecast of the 95th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 12, 2023. Photo by Blaine Ohigashi.*

elegant in a Ralph Lauren hooded silver sequined gown. She attended the awards ceremony for the first time with her husband, Asser Malik. The 25-year-old was a favorite at the Dolby Theatre as award-winning actresses Yeoh and Curtis dropped by her seat to say hello and talk with her.

One of the most memorable parts of the evening was when Oscar host Jimmy Kimmel asked Malala the mundane question, “As the youngest Nobel Prize winner in history, I was wondering, do you think Harry Styles spit on Chris Pine?”

To which the smart Malala simply responded, “I only talk about peace.”

Cocaine Bear and Jenny the Donkey made special appearances. But that was not the only reason why the ratings were high.





*Above: Jimmy Kimmel hosts the live ABC telecast of the 95th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 12, 2023. Photo by Phil McCarten.*



*Left: M.M. Keeravaani and Chandrabose pose backstage with the Oscar® for Original Song during the live ABC telecast of the 95th Oscars® at Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 12, 2023. Photo by Michael Yada.*

*Below: Cocaine Bear and host Jimmy Kimmel at the 95th Oscars®. Photo by Richard Harbaugh.*



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## OUR MISSION

Forgotten Song Foundation, Inc., a registered 501c3 organization, is dedicated to recognizing, remembering, and sustaining the visual artists and performance artistry of live music for future generations.

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[forgottensongfoundation.org](http://forgottensongfoundation.org)



# ABOUT TOWN



**Maxine Gaines 87th Birthday at The Italian American Club (Photo by Dave Williams)**

**Above:** Back Row (L to R) Harvey Buchsbaum, John Griego, Jim Pichiotino; Front Row (L to R) Audry Buchsbaum, Maxine Gaines

## **Nevada Ballet Theatre's *Blue Until June***

**Left:** Sidra Bell and Cindy Fox

## **Wine Art and Music at Portnoy Gallery (2nd Tuesday of Every Month, Photo by David O Photo)**

**Below:** February 2023 Entertainer Inductees into the "Portnoyed" Wall of Honor (L to R): Dorothy Portnoy (Owner of Portnoy Gallery), Travis Cloer, Kyle Martin, Paige Strafella, Alicia Peronne, Victor James, Stephanie Sanchez and Neal Portnoy (Artist/Owner of Portnoy Gallery)





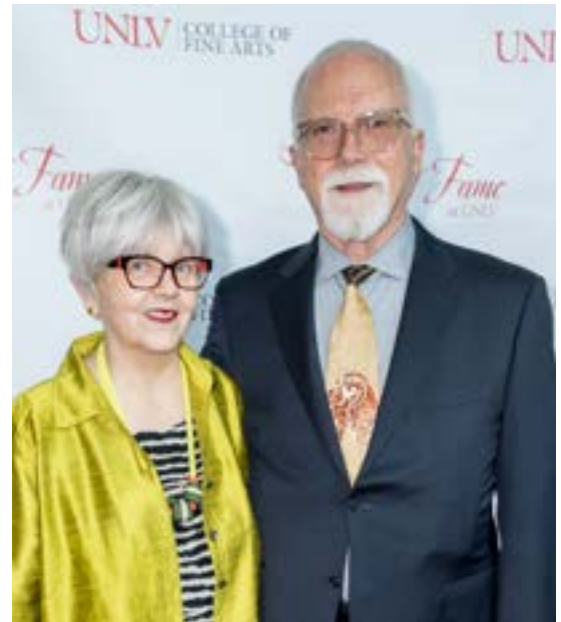
**Chic Compass Launch Party** (Photography by Cashman Photo)  
**Above:** (L to R) D TRAIN, Christine Turner, Earl Turner, Ann Parenti, Curtis McCoy  
**Right:** Rosalind Lee Walton-Russell, Mark Gunter, Joan Peck



**Above:** (L to R) Dexter Jasper, Sherry Gordy, Mark Gunter, Nate Jones, Ann Parenti, David Tupaz  
**Below:** Robert Dolan, Sally Pera, Byrum Lee, Ann Parenti, Joseph Amato



**Above:** (L to R) Joan Peck, Rose Kendrick, Maria Robinson, Alisa Steinhauer



**UNLV College of Fine Arts Hall of Fame** (Photography courtesy of Cashman Photo)  
**Above:** (L to R) Lorraine Thompson Sardelli, Nelson Sardelli, Giovanna Sardelli, Pietra Sardelli  
**Right:** Lynn & James Stanford



**Above:** (L to R) Elizabeth Bowes, Anna Rose Einarsen, David Copperfield, Dean Nancy Uscher



**Left:** (L to R) Keely Eshenbaugh, Lauren Knight, Dwayne Eshenbaugh, Rachel Cline



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MODEL: HOLLY MADISON IN WINDSOR BLUE

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