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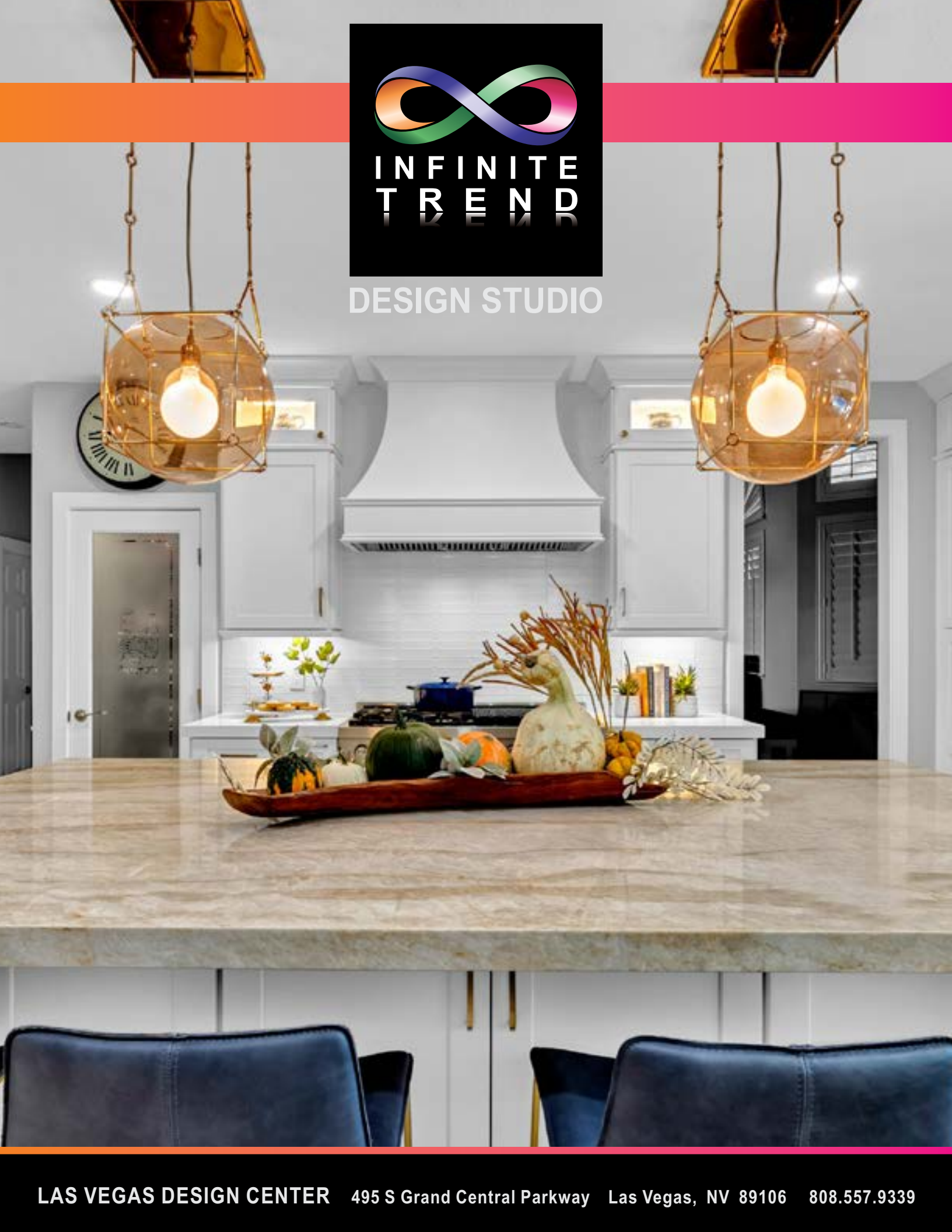
VOLUME 5 | EDITION 3

IT JUST MAKES SCENTS:  
**ANN-MARGRET**



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*Photo of Anna Gupta by Liquid Star Photography (Jaime Lim)*

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Joseph Amato



Sheryl Aronson



Stacey Gualandi



Debbie Hall



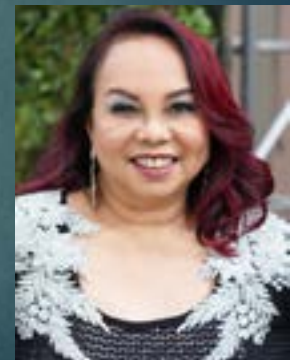
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**Joan S. Peck**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## *From the Editor*

---

Viva Las Vegas! Welcome to the latest edition of *Chic Compass* and all inside it covers! Las Vegas is all about ... beauty, fashion, music, food, creativity, talent, and travel! Our multi-talented writers have out-done themselves to share fabulous, beautiful stories about what makes Las Vegas such an exciting place to live. We can't wait for you to see what we have waiting for you!

We are delighted to have the age-less Ann-Margret grace our cover. She has had an exciting, rewarding career, part of which has occurred here in Las Vegas. Not to be stopped, she has recently created a unique Ann-Margret Eau de Parfum, which has just launched with its proceeds going to a worthy cause. Can you guess where?

Education has always been important here in the valley. Must-read articles are about The Las Vegas Academy of the Arts (LVA) and Hero School. LVA is one of the nation's premier arts magnet schools, serving nearly 1,750 students across the Greater Las Vegas Valley. The Hero School talks about Tiger Todd's Four Laws Of Entrepreneurship, helping to engage, motivate, and reeducate disengaged and disconnected youth and adults. What fantastic stories!

Always exciting, we delve into fashion, the backbone of *Chic Compass*. It is thrilling to have David Tupaz present us again with a stunning designer collection, this time with a different approach. You will swoon when you see designer Ana Gupta model her own expression of High Fashion as photographed by Jaime Lim.

---

## ON THE COVER

**MODEL:**  
Ann-Margret

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY:**  
James Franklin

Photographer Ed Foster has become part of the Las Vegas entertainment scene, with his camera snapping away and capturing some of the performers who make Vegas their home or those who come to entertain us. "I love living in Las Vegas. I think it is the entertainment center of the country." For a man in his 90's, he is remarkable.

Dig It! Coffee Co. joins the area creating a thriving community "serving kindness, coffee, and inclusion." Taylor Gardner Chaney, founder, and owner, modeled her business with its core to serve coffee and sweet drinks while fostering inclusion for adults with disabilities. What a boon for Las Vegas.

Travel brings us to Germany with Elaine and Scott Harris showing us so many aspects of the country ... from great cities and museums to fabulous food. Enjoy all their photos, and who knows? Maybe Germany will be your next trip.

There is no place better in the world for entertainment than Las Vegas. Sam Novak brings us a story about FANS OF JIMMY CENTURY, the outlandish psychedelic musical group. Lead singer Alicia Perrone and bassist Victor James have formed their unique universe; if you are lucky, you can join the fun. Look for when they will be here, and don't miss out.

On a different vibe, Sheryl Aronson writes about the famous pianist Keiko Matsui who has just released her 30th album, *Euphoria*, with Shanachie Entertainment on March 31st, 2023. For anyone who hasn't heard her divinely created music, you will want to listen to it and be carried away by each note that is about "the hope we all carry inside of us,"

Janet Nepales shares the scoop about Cinema-Con, the largest and most important gathering of the worldwide motion picture theater industry, which recently handed out awards to the best and brightest in the entertainment industry. The global event,

which attracts attendees from more than 80 countries, was held at the Caesar's Palace. The official convention of The National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) has been held annually in Las Vegas since 2011.

You won't want to miss reading Laura Henkel's story about Melinda Sheckells, a top influencer in how media covers Las Vegas and how popular culture developed here. Melinda is a writer, editor, and so much more. She guides locals to the hippest and newest locations through her news affiliations and "shows tourists the granular parts of Vegas they would never find." What a fascinating person and what an asset to Las Vegas.

Brian Thornton shares another designer's move into creating her own art. Tracy Sonka Stultz is an emerging artist with an affinity for technology, the unabashed embrace of AI [Artificial Intelligence], and all the benefits of a dual interior designer and artist career. Stultz's painting style is unique and something you'll want to contemplate.

You won't want to miss out on reading Joe Amato's business story about how to ensure your business survives. He focuses on business survival tools and methods that you must take very seriously to ensure you can withstand the business unknowns and pitfalls we will face in the next 12 to 24 months.

Sit back and enjoy reading this month's *Chic Compass* nod to Viva Las Vegas!

Until next time ....

*Joan S. Peck*



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*Justin Chambers with Ann-Margret. Photo by James Franklin.*

# IT JUST MAKES SCENTS

ANN-MARGRET AND JUSTIN CHAMBERS JOIN FORCES  
FOR ANN-MARGRET PERFUME

---

By Stacey Gualandi  
Photography courtesy of Ann-Margret

In 1998, long before *Yellowstone*, there was a ranch family drama series called *Four Corners* starring Ann-Margret. While CBS ended it after just two episodes, it began an unlikely 25-year friendship between the legendary singer-actress-dancer and her co-star, actor Justin Chambers.

"He's my pal," laughs Ann-Margret. "We are very much alike. But I love his humor. I think he's really funny. I laugh at everything he says!"

At that time, Ann-Margret was, of course, Hollywood royalty, who became an overnight success in *Bye Bye Birdie* and then captivated audiences with her unforgettable turn opposite Elvis Presley in *Viva Las Vegas* — just two iconic films from a multi-award-winning career spanning several decades. It was also just a handful of years before Chambers, a

former Calvin Klein model, would make TV history as Dr. Alex Karev on ABC's *Grey's Anatomy*.

"I loved 'Ann-Margrock' in *The Flintstones*," jokes Chambers of being a long-time Ann-Margret fan. "I was a HUGE fan of all her work. I knew *Carnal Knowledge*, and *Tommy* is one of my favorite rock operas of all time. I think what made Ann-Margret stand out from so many people I've worked with in this business is that she has such integrity and a heart of gold...we live in a world where people abuse the word legend or icon, but she is the real deal."

But it was her tireless work on behalf of American troops during the Vietnam War that sealed her icon status. Before being discovered by THE George Burns, she entertained the armed forces as a college student during a USO tour in 1960. Once she became

a famous movie star, she couldn't resist returning.

"I received a letter a long time ago from [troops] in Vietnam, and they wanted me to come there and perform," she says. "I remember there were 3000 signatures on this one letter, so I wanted to go the next day!"

In 1966, she returned to Vietnam with the USO and three bandmates for a life-threatening, 15-day excursion through war-torn areas and enemy fire. (You'll recall that aerial photo on the USS Yorktown where sailors welcomed her by standing in formation spelling out "Hi Annie!")

Two years later, she was back in a colorful minidress and white go-go boots to perform in front of tens of thousands of soldiers for her best friend Bob Hope's Christmas USO show.



“One thing I can do is entertain. I can sing and dance, and that’s what I did,” says Ann-Margret.

She became synonymous with the Vietnam War, even being mentioned in a memorable line from the film *Full Metal Jacket*. (“Sir, does this mean that Ann-Margret is not coming?”)

So, to salute her endless support of all the American men and women who served in Vietnam, Chambers began sniffing around for a project years ago that they could work on together—off-screen.



His former modeling gig endorsing Calvin Klein cologne gave him the idea to develop an Ann-Margret perfume, and he wouldn’t stop bugging her about it until she said yes.

Says Chambers, “It just makes perfect sense!” (Pun intended.)

“Like cookies and milk!” laughs Ann-Margret.

Joking aside, Chambers says he always wanted to make his friend a perfume for her patriotism and then present it to the world.



“We focused on her time with the USO; that played a big part in this,” says Chambers. “We’re really paying tribute to her for making sacrifices, performing, and putting herself in danger for the troops, many of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice.”

Their collaboration — which debuted in May — is an auto-





graphed, \$100 limited edition Ann-Margret Eau de Parfum that can now be purchased online at [annmargretperfume.com](http://annmargretperfume.com).

"We brought in people that knew what they were doing, and of course, Ann-Margret had a lot to say about what she liked and didn't like," admits Chambers.

"I finally said yes because I really liked everyone involved in this," says Ann-Margret. "And my favorite perfume is Gardenia, which

happens to be the main source for this perfume."

"Someone had mentioned it smells a little like heaven, and I like that. It's sweet, but not too sweet," boasts Chambers. "Gardenia is the middle note, but it's got jasmine, ylang-ylang, and musk. It's soft but strong at the same time."

So what makes this celebrity-endorsed perfume different from all the other celebrity scents?

"All the profits go to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund," says Ann-Margret. "I love my guys."

For an 82-year-old who still rides a lavender motorcycle, there was no time like the present to have a perfume named after her. After all, it's just another testament to Ann-Margret's ageless beauty, both inside and out.

"Oh my gosh, I think, well, I know I'm happy," says Ann-Margret on staying young at heart. (She still



owns those go-go boots, by the way!) “I’m crazed and glazed! Ha!”

Adds Chambers, “Yep, yep, you are! I mean, who else cuts a rock ‘n’ roll record at 81?”

(That’s right. Ann-Margret just released “Born to be Wild,” her first new studio album in over a decade, with her favorite rock ‘n’ roll songs!)

Ann-Margret says the experience in Vietnam all those years ago was “one of the most important

things in my life and always will be.” Her “support and admiration” for our men and women in uniform has never wavered. To this day, she still receives mail from troops who served in Vietnam.

“It just makes me feel good that I could do something while they were out there risking everything.”

For a working friendship that could have easily ended on a television set 25 years ago, the bond between Ann-Margret and Justin Chambers has stood the

test of time and now will leave a lasting impression. It certainly smells like team spirit.

“I’m happy that Ann-Margret didn’t give up on me. She believed I could pull it off, so we made it happen,” says Chambers. “I’m just honoring my friend, who I care very deeply for, and to thank her for all her hard work, dedication, and being loving, kind, and gracious.”

To purchase Ann-Margret perfume, visit the website: [annmargretperfume.com](http://annmargretperfume.com).



# wander in wonder



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A photograph of a modern interior space. A large, multi-paned window with black frames is the central focus, offering a view of a lush garden with green plants, a stone planter, and a closed patio umbrella. To the right, a dark wooden table holds a large, dark-colored pot with white orchids. A modern, cylindrical pendant light hangs from the ceiling. The room features white architectural details and a polished floor.

# DISCOVER. INNOVATE. EMERGE. A CONVERSATION WITH ARTIST TRACY SONKA STULTZ

By Brian G. Thornton



Just who is Tracy Sonka Stultz? I met Tracy and her husband, Eric Stultz, at the global architectural firm Gensler in Washington, D.C. Our mutual friendship developed when I spent years knowing Eric as the architect and Tracy as the interior designer. But this story is about none of the above....

In the twenty-seven years of friendship, experiencing life, cross-country moves, and reconnecting professionally in Las Vegas, I have missed a lot, it seems, about Sonka Stultz and the emerging artist's affinity for technology, the unabashed embrace of AI [Artificial Intelligence], and all the benefits of a dual interior designer and artist career.

As a design professional, wife, and mother of two adult children, Sonka Stultz has never shied away from international travel for global projects or working for several design firms, including Hirsch Bedner Associates, Gesler, and her bespoke studio these days. She's always had talents and skills in both interior design and art.

Chic Compass: How did you get started in interior design?

Sonka Stultz: I remember my feeling of accomplishment over my first oil painting at eight years old. From that point on, my only true passion was art. As a third-generation archi-

tectural designer and photographer, I started painting in oils as a young child and sculpting wood in my dad's workshop through high school. In high school, I studied art and got an associate degree in art from the then-popular Art Instructions School.

**Chic Compass:** Delving into any creative's background often reveals pivotal moments or events that shape them for life.

**Sonka Stultz:** As the youngest of six children, our family had limited financial resources, so when they agreed to pay for college-level art classes when I was 14 and three of my five siblings were already in college, I understood this was a significant sacrifice.

At seventeen, I asked my creative mentor Aunt Sugi, "What should I do?"

I wanted to be independent and support myself. Aunt Sugi suggested I study Interior Design to keep me in a creative field and allow me to make enough money to support myself. I applied for and attended the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles and fell in love with interior design and the idiom "God is in the details." I have been practicing residential and hospitality interior design for over three decades.

**Chic Compass:** Most people can barely do one task at a time; how did you discover you could do both – interior design and painting?



*K Series "Stolen" - Encaustic and ink 18"x24"*







*Wing Lei Restaurant Dining Room in Macau*

Sonka Stultz: Interior Design has bursts of creativity and creative problem-solving but also has phases in the project that are more technical and administrative. It was during these times that I was able to continue painting. I also enjoyed working with clients interested in having and commissioning original art for my projects. Great examples are Penny Pritzker, a client with a passion (and budget) for original art, and I worked together on a beautiful new construction multi-family high rise in Washington, DC.

Working with client Nita Ambani on her iconic 27-story home in Mumbai was revelational. The sheer volume and quality of her original art collection floored me. I toured her collection one day in Mumbai and will never forget it."

Roger Thomas at Wynn Design, a great patron of the arts, always supported my desire to incorporate original art into our designs. He was very knowledgeable about local artists and helped realize the massive 30-foot crystal dragon sculpture we commissioned above the dining booths as the restaurant's focal point. (This design was subsequently replicated at the Wynn Encore in Las Vegas.) The original Wing Lei Restaurant in Macau was an excellent example of our collaboration.

While at Hirsh Bedner Associates, I worked with Roger Thomas and Steve Wynn on Wynn Macau and Las Vegas. I enjoyed the relationship so much that I seriously considered a significant offer from them."

Chic Compass: Her crafting the pandemic into an opportunity to grow intrigued me. What helped to expand your creativity as an artist?

Sonka Stultz: During my thirty-five years as an Interior Designer, I would take the lulls in projects to paint. As COVID set in and non-essential construction was halted in Los Angeles, the pauses stretched out and stir craziness set in. We took a vacation up the western coast of the United States in a rented RV. This trip ended up being a catalyst for painting, as the immeasurable beauty of our coast inspired many new works."

Sonka Stultz emphasizes, "From Sculpting with found stones and driftwood to modernizing the ancient encaustic medium by add-



*Superhero 1 - Drift Wood and Metal, 18" x 10" x 5"*

ing inks, oils, and at times burnt fabric, I am searching to create distinctly human pieces of art, all the while exploring how to collaborate with AI solution providers. I believe it is naive to think AI won't replace most creative professionals in the foreseeable future. We can't comprehend all the ways AI is changing the world RIGHT NOW. From military applications, medical, and diagnostics, to concept and schematic design for interior designers and archi-

itects, to dating (EG, the dating app SNACK allows my bots to talk to your bot before we ever converse)."

During the pandemic, a six-year ground-up construction on a 15,000 SF residential estate in Calabasas was winding down. I'd had my fingers in all aspects of planning, landscape, architecture, and interior design, and I needed to keep that creative energy flowing.

Chic Compass: Where do you find your inspiration?

Sonka Stultz: "I find my inspiration from many great artists. I follow Iniko's music as they have a stunning fashion aesthetic and hypnotic musical style, AI architecture sites, Refik Anadol's revolutionary digital art, techno-minimal-orientalism, science, astronomy, and geology. When I travel, I collect local artists' jewelry and small items, but primarily memories are captured with my camera. I wish I had a bigger home to showcase all the artists I love."

Chic Compass: How many places you've lived and traveled influenced your style?

Sonka Stultz: As a self-described 'bi-coastal girl,' Tracy says, "Growing up in the Laguna Mountains in the Cleveland National Forest east of San Diego and Maryland's extraordinary weather events helped cement my love of capturing nature both on the canvas and with the camera."

I have traveled extensively through Asia, Europe, and the Americas and enjoyed photographing nature in traditional and unusual ways. The photographic moments have greatly influenced the style and palettes of my paintings. My website has both an Abstract Photography section and a Landscape section.

Chic Compass: What does a day in your Studio look like?

Sonka Stultz: Every day, I try to start with a clean workspace,

then crank up my music, and time flies, leaving chaos and destruction in my tidy world. And that's ok. Sometimes I have no idea where the process will lead me, while at other times, I have a very clear image. I get completely absorbed and hyper-focused. Barry Kaufman is an author and educator who wrote about the "Messy

Minds of Creative People." A non-linear thinking process leads to a lot of trial and error, but having a harmonious passion helps settle the complex contradictions in my brain to focus the output of each creative event."

Chic Compass: How do you view your art?

Sonka Stultz: My art is a journey that is just emerging now, and I can't foresee the opportunities ahead, but with an unquenchable thirst for innovation and growth, I am on a powerful journey to stay ahead of AI in the art world."

"I paint by firing molten beeswax (mixed with damar resin) and



Iceland - Photo by Tracy Sonka Stultz

adding India inks in a modern version of the ancient Greek encaustic technique using fire to apply and infuse pigments, and at times burnt fabric, into the wax. I first noticed an uptick in encaustic artists coming out of the UK and loved the depth and texture it allowed. Intrigued. I signed up for an extensive online course taught by many of the best encaustic artists in the world."

Chic Compass: What about growth and future collections?

Sonka Stultz: "SCALE. I'd love to move into much larger encaustic

works. The largest encaustics I have are 30 x 60, but I see a very large triptych in my future. Currently, the only large pieces I have are mixed media."

I have a beautiful outdoor space adjacent to my studio that allows me to get really messy with my anthropomorphic sculptures. They incorporate driftwood, found stones, and mixed media. I can spend hours in front of a pile of wood playing with compositions before something clicks in my brain. Deep personal memories frequently inspire my work as well as the pieces themselves.

Chic Compass: What comes next?

Sonka Stultz: "I have so many ideas in my head I can barely keep up, but I would love a custom commission for a hospitality or commercial lobby."

I am currently working on my K-Series, which is somewhat influenced by Kandinsky and Klimt. AI will definitely influence my future series in some way. This tool is just too powerful to ignore entirely. As we start to understand the far-reaching implications of the apocalyptic avalanche of AI technology, my task as a human artist is to understand how to utilize this tool and differentiate between the potential and the peril. I don't think AI will replace me, but I do believe artists working with AI may replace artists that don't work with AI. I've spent many years designing a computer. Now I can design with it. Regarding shows, my ongoing anthropomorphic sculpture series was devised to complement my encaustic landscapes, and I hope to have a show to feature both within the following year.

Tracy Sonka Stultz is a multi-talented artist and interior designer with a long and impressive career in the industry. It's fascinating to learn about the different aspects of her life and career that many may not have been aware of before, and this conversation was worth the discovery.



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# MELINDA SHECKELLS

## THE QUEEN OF COOL

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By Laura Henkel  
Photography courtesy of Melinda Sheckells

Melinda Sheckells is, without a doubt, one of Las Vegas's greatest assets. Over the past decade, she has played an important part in influencing how the media covers Las Vegas and how popular culture has developed there. She has honed her skills as a writer, editor, and producer to a high level and exudes sophisticated sophistication.

Ryan Doherty, owner of Corner Bar Management, Park on Fremont, Commonwealth, and many other fabulous city venues, shares, "Melinda has been a cultural engineer in Vegas for as long as I can remember. Guiding locals to the hippest and newest locations through her news affiliations and showing tourists the granular parts of Vegas they would never find. She is utterly outrageous, yet so self-aware, and her particular variant of "cool" rubs off on anything she covers."

Melinda is a visionary and, dare





I say it, an OG Influencer. As an award-winning journalist, she is always one step ahead of the curve when it comes to topics like celebrity culture, cuisine, traveling, and fashion. I would be willing to wager that she has positively impacted some aspect of your life without you even being aware of who she is. It may have been to try out a new restaurant, go to an art gallery, watch a play or performance, visit another country or say yes to the dress! Because she always has her finger on the pulse of current events, she never misses a beat when it comes to reporting on what is popular. She also isn't afraid to start new trends.

She first arrived in Las Vegas on Memorial Day weekend in 2007 to begin work as the editor of a publication named *Las Vegas Home and Design* for Greenspun Media Group. It was a supplement to *Las Vegas Life*, one of their oldest publications that had been published for a million years. She swiftly advanced to the position of editor at *Vegas Magazine*. She began contributing to many of the commissioned magazine projects the company was undertaking at the time, including those for The Venetian, Wynn, and CityCenter, as well as a coffee table book for Caesars Palace. She started hosting weekly television segments on Fox 5 connected to *Las Vegas*

*Home and Design*, which eventually led to a large amount of other work in the media industry. After that, she was an editor for *944 Magazine*, *Vegas Seven*, and *Vegas Rated* (the first national newsstand publication about Las Vegas), co-founded *Crystals Magazine* with MGM Resorts, and was appointed head of content for the Life is Beautiful festival.

About ten years before her move here, Melinda's mom and stepdad moved to Las Vegas to reside in her grandfather Gaylord's house after he passed away. Her grandfather and his family had deep ties to the town's banking community. With a twinkle in her eye, Melinda often states that



they brought legit bank money to all the big casino deals during the '60s and '70s when a lot of money came in by more mysterious means. Melinda says, "My mom had wanted me to move to Vegas for quite some time as I was living in Newport Beach, where I went to college. Newport Beach is a gorgeous place, but it is a pretty sleepy town, and she thought I needed the pizzazz of Vegas to really take flight. She knew what she was talking about. Plus, she dangled the no-state income tax

angle in front of me, and who can argue with that."

In 2018, when *Vegas Seven* closed, she embarked on new career endeavors, allowing her to further develop her creative skills and providing her with new opportunities. She became the Director of Digital Content for Audacy Radio after launching *Tasty Tuesday* on KTNV. During that time, she hosted a weekly entertainment show with Mark Gray called *Flip The Strip*. Following

that, she was promoted to editorial director for *OfftheStrip / OnTheStrip*.

She started her own boutique content agency, Write Said Fed, where she works with national lifestyle and entertainment outlets such as *Business Traveler* magazine, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Variety*, *Billboard*, *Forbes Travel Guide*, *Hospitality Design*, and *Out Magazine*. In addition to this, she works in the corporate sector, providing her services to governmental institutions, casinos, hotels, and luxury brands. Not one to stay still, she collaborated with the Clark County Clerk's Office in 2021 to establish *Weddings.Vegas*. The following year, she launched *Wynn Stories*, an editorial portal for Wynn Resorts.

Melinda is also an equal opportunist. She has always supported new businesses and people working in a wide range of fields through all her media outlets. She has never wavered in shining the spotlight on projects that will lift our community. Melinda gives these projects the same amount of care and respect as she does when she is featuring a well-known place or celebrity, such as Iris Apfel, Diplo, Gordon Ramsay, or Damien Hirst, to name a few. Her excitement to show people the best that Las Vegas offers knows no bounds, and she wants to share it with as many people as possible. It is just who Melinda is. She always comes from a place of positivity.

Because she has such a strong respect for equality and a strong



desire to see both business and people thrive, sometimes the “love” she gives is returned in the most one-of-a-kind and extraordinary ways. As a token of appreciation for all Melinda does for our community, the creator of The Golden Tiki, Branden Powers, included a shrunken head of “Melinda” — complete with her signature beautiful curls — as part of the establishment’s permanent macabre collection. That’s love, right?

It would be quite negligent of me if I did not point out that Melinda remains youthful and does not age. Either she has a picture stashed away in an attic, or she can tap into one of the many energy vortexes rumored to be located across Sin City. Either way, Melinda possesses an endless supply of energy and a spring to her step. She is forever effervescent with a panache for Hello Kitty.

Of course, my mind immediately goes to the people she has interviewed and the places she has gone for assignments. When asked if she had any unique encounters while on assignment, she answered, “Needless to say, Vegas was the right place for me and has far exceeded my wildest dreams bringing me opportunities I never thought possible. I have interviewed the living Beatles, I have flown in a helicopter over a wheat field in Sweden with the creator of Absolut, Martha Stewart has given me marital advice, I have been to the Pahrump courthouse with Heidi Fleiss, and I have been blessed by Elton John

on my 40th birthday — I have forgotten more extraordinary things than I will ever remember, but luckily most of them live somewhere on the web or in print.”

As Melinda is the epitome of professionalism, I asked her for additional details regarding her encounter with The Beatles because inquiring minds need to know. She states, “I remember tearing up after I interviewed Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, and Ron Howard — the impact of their creativity and seeing their

body language and interaction, and Ringo hugged me. Celebrity doesn’t get bigger than that — and in their case, neither does talent. It is rare that those things converge in such an impactful way that touches the entire universe.” < Mic drop! >

I asked Melinda what distinguishes Las Vegas from other cosmopolitan cities and whether she would ever contemplate leaving the glitz and glamour. Her response was direct and to the point. “Less traffic, less local businesses, and



**PALMS.** KAOS  
*Portraits by The Collective You*

less support for them - but it is growing. Traditionally, Vegas has been a transient community, but now we have a second generation who left and came back or those who are choosing to stay - we change slowly, but we have changed. We now have almost everything big cities do but with a small-town mentality. I always say Vegas is where you can't go to the grocery store without make-up because it's a small town. That hasn't changed! I could not imagine a better life - the airport is 15 minutes away, and I can pretty much get anywhere in the world

without a hassle. Plus, my mom is here. Through my connections with various publications, I now also have the chance to cover the world, so I am not limited to what happens in our backyard. Then again, all roads lead to Vegas!"

For those who may not be familiar with the print magazines that Melinda served on as editor mentioned at the beginning of this article, I will try my best to describe them. They were chic, modern, beautiful, and cutting-edge, and the content was perfectly balanced with visuals: text, graph-

ics, subjects, and advertising. It was an era whereby no cost was spared on production. From the photoshoots, and swank layouts, to the thick paper stock and glossy print, they felt substantial and rich to the touch. These publications were designed with "luxury" in mind. You couldn't wait to get the most recent issue every week, month, or quarter. The magazines were bountiful and free throughout Las Vegas and beyond. Unfortunately, due to increased costs associated with publishing and the pandemic, several publications completely disappeared from the market, or they have become a shadow of their former selves. The market had changed so severely that most could not adjust to survive. Wendoh Media, the publisher of *Vegas Rated* and *Seven Magazine*, was a casualty of that era. Fortunately, Melinda shares some of her all-time favorite magazine covers, of which she is the proudest. It is an honor to feature Melinda and her contribution in *Chic Compass*, as there is a shared admiration and respect to not only elevate Las Vegas' arts and culture but also to reflect the city's many dimensions of beauty.

Melinda's influence on Las Vegas' modern culture is significant. While cultivating the path forward, she remains humble, approachable, and authentic. "I just write the stories, and hopefully, people read them. I think I've been lucky that they've landed in national outlets, so hopefully, the world sees how cool we are and learns something new about Vegas. When I started writing a lot



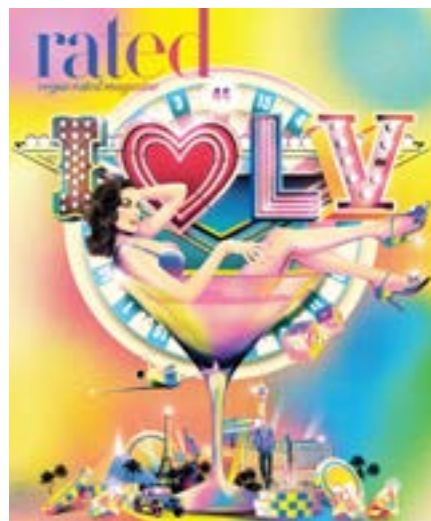
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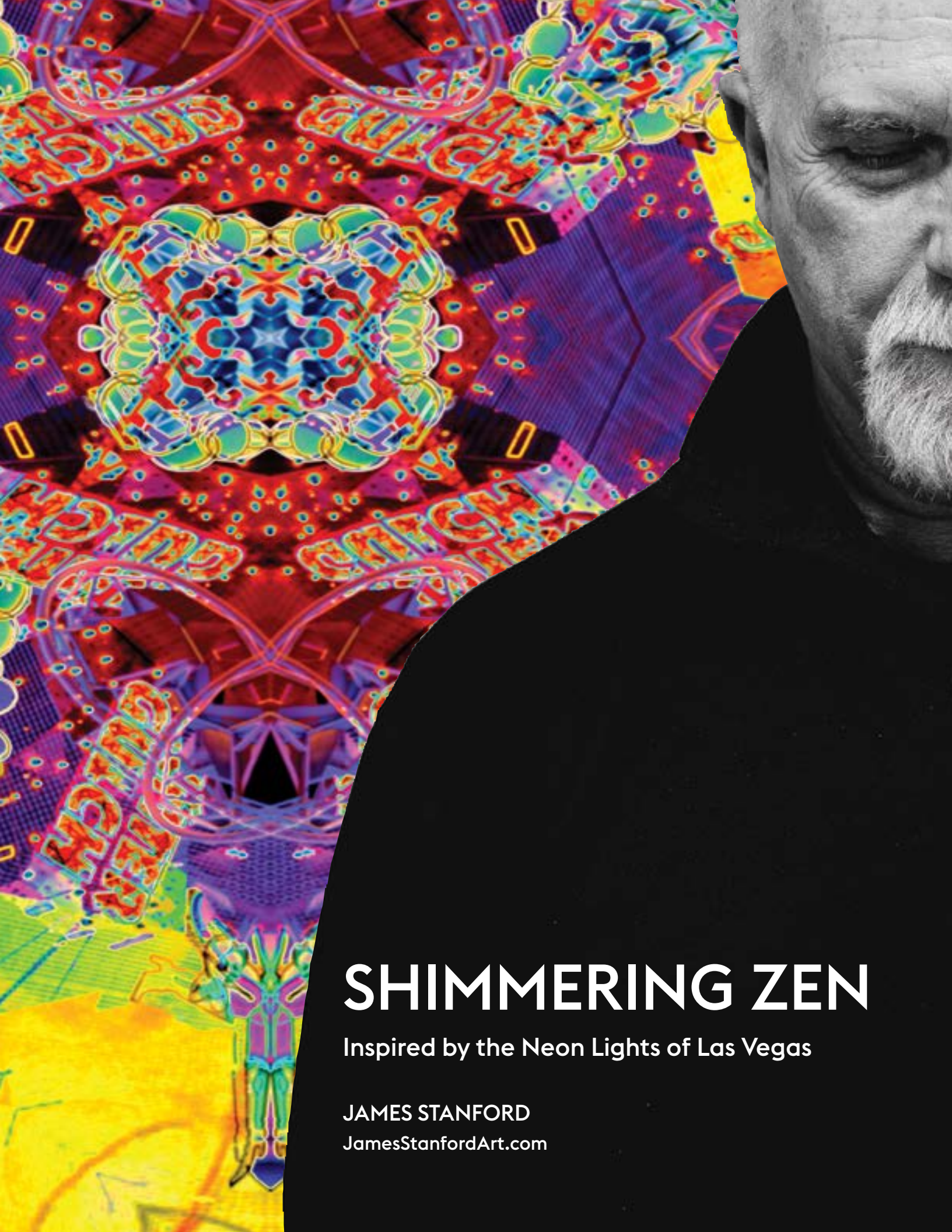
*“Melinda’s influence on Las Vegas’ modern culture is significant.”*

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on the national level, most publications were still bringing writers in — what I think makes the difference is I am based here and have insider knowledge! Plus, a lot of what I write about now is how the tentacles of Vegas have spread across the world — many people I have met in Vegas are now doing big things elsewhere, so I follow those stories too.”

There is no doubt in my mind that in the not-too-distant future, Melinda will have the post of editor at a publication that is highly known internationally. This is a prediction that I can make with absolute certainty. The amount of talent that she possesses cannot be overstated in any way! I look forward with great enthusiasm to the achievements that are still to come for her.





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# Smith

## The Las Vegas Academy of Arts

Showcasing Three Decades as a National Star

By Kendall Hardin

Photography courtesy of Las Vegas Academy and Cashman Photo Enterprises

The Las Vegas Academy of the Arts (LVA) is one of the premier arts magnet schools in the nation. Its award-winning programs serve nearly 1,750 students across the Greater Las Vegas Valley.

Located in the center of the Las Vegas Founders District in Downtown Las Vegas, LVA serves Clark County School District high school students. The school provides students the opportunity to pursue a major in one of four conservatory areas - dance, music, theatre, or visual arts.

A vast array of programs includes band, vocal music, dance, guitar, mariachi, orchestra, photography, piano, studio art, technical theatre, theatre, graphic design, video production, world jazz studies, and a new major in digital communications. LVA is tuition-free, but all students must



*Above: Guitar students in concert*



*Above: Annual Concert at The Smith Center with guest artist Clint Holmes*

audition or prepare a portfolio to be accepted.

The school offers students intellectually challenging learning experiences and empowers them with critical 21st-century skills and knowledge to compete successfully in the international workplace. LVA is a FIVE-STAR school, according to the Nevada School Accountability System, and boasts a 100% graduation rate. The magnet school offers a rigorous Advanced Placement program, with over 80% of its graduating seniors enrolling in a post-secondary institution. Last year alone, over \$22 million in scholarships were awarded.

## Creating a National Pacesetter

The Las Vegas Academy of the Arts boasts a legion of national, state, and local accolades, including recognition from the White House to Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman. Designated a School of Distinction by Magnet Schools of America, it has received twelve Grammy Signature School Awards for excellence in music programs and has been recognized by the International Network of Performing and Visual Arts Schools as a STAR school.

In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education recognized LVA as a New American High School.

Two years later, it honored LVA as a U.S. Blue Ribbon School, making it one of only 17 high schools in the country to have received both prestigious awards.

“At LVA, we nurture excellence in arts and academics through a rigorous dual curriculum,” affirmed Principal Scott Walker, who’s been at LVA’s helm for eleven years. “The school is different, and when you set foot on our campus, you feel it. Each day we create a learning environment fueled by a passion for the transformative nature of the arts.

“Here, the arts are not an ‘elective.’ They are a core and essential area of study. As an exemplary institution, we strive to be

a leading public arts-focused school nationwide. We have graduated 100% of our senior class for the past several years. And we are grateful and proud of the many community partnerships supporting our mission.”

## Building the Future on Historic Roots

LVA's campus is located on the site of the first high school in Las Vegas, which opened in 1931. Many residents complained that the school was too far from the small population at the time,

*“Here, the arts are not an ‘elective.’ They are a core and essential area of study.”*

---

which changed as the city grew up around it. Two of the original buildings’ exteriors are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as prized examples of the city’s art deco architecture from the 30s.

Starting with 735 students, the school opened as a magnet school in 1993 and officially debuted as the Las Vegas Academy of Arts in 2014. The school now enrolls 1,735 students, a growth rate of 240%.

Today, the campus occupies a four-square-block area. On-site classrooms, a cafeteria, a gym, and an outdoor field complement the music, visual arts, vocational and administration buildings. The school’s theatrical venues include the LVA Performing Arts Center (1200 seating capacity), Lowden Theatre for the Performing Arts (700 seating capacity), and an intimate black box space.



*Above: Theatre students with Hamilton star Lin-Manuel Miranda (orange hoodie)*





*Above: LVA vocal, dance and Mariachi students performing as hosts of the national Arts School Network Conference in October 2022.*

## Celebrating Today to Launch Tomorrow

Proud to be one of the most sought-after schools for both the arts and academics—with a 5-star rating, a near-perfect graduation rate, and some of the highest test scores in the state—LVA capitalized on its 30th birthday to showcase performances in all major programs throughout the academic year. Two generous donors stepped up to match all gifts up to \$50,000 to champion arts programs on campus.

Through a grant from the Friends of LVA, the school launched the “Master Artist Series” this year. The innovative program included performances, master classes, and residencies designed to inspire students in all four conservatories. Guest artists included actor/performer Ben Vereen, world-renowned mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick, Hamilton cast member Thane Jaspersen, and

jazz musician/recording artist Tom Scott, to name a few luminaries. The school is already planning year two of this “Bring the Best to LVA” initiative and seeking additional sponsors to expand its current scope.

As part of LVA’s future expansion, the school is preparing to construct additional facilities and restore the historic building in early 2024. The campaign involves three large-scale phases to complete over the next decade. New facilities include a gym, parking garage, student union/academic building, and a new music facility. The plan also includes rehabilitating the historic Main Building, Gym, Frazier Building, and the Vocational Building.

## Step into a Starring Role

The school offers dozens of ways for people to engage with and

support LVA throughout the year. One can join Friends of LVA, the nonprofit fundraising arm of the school to volunteer for or bankroll events like the annual gala and performance events. Donating to LVA’s “Aspiring Artist Program” supports economically disadvantaged students with full access to the LVA experience. And giving to the “Legacy Program” helps build a sizable endowment to secure the school’s next three decades.

Perhaps one of the most personally rewarding options is to purchase performance talent as part of the school’s “Bring LVA to You” program. Be your own impresario and choose from jazz, caroling, orchestral ensembles, choral groups, solo voice, and harp concerts - all available on LVA’s website. Talent fees range from \$125 to \$1,000 per hour. Imagine how tomorrow’s Oscar, Grammy, or Emmy star recipient may be among your performers!

## A New Generation of *Viva Las Vegas!* Talent

LVA's bottom line is to ensure that all LVA students experience a world-class education in an arts-integrated modern school system. The common goal is to meet all students where they are and develop their artistic talents through curriculum and experiences that unlock their potential.

"We pride ourselves in our ability to unite many lifestyles and beliefs through a culturally relevant curriculum," cites Principal Scott Walker. "We are committed to constant improvement as one of the leading public arts-focused schools in the nation.

"We strive to create classrooms where students are alive with collaboration, intellectual discourse, and problem-solving. We recognize that our students are unique thinkers, and we use the arts to harness the diversity of our young thinkers.

As principal, I remain committed to working with all of our students, staff, parents, and community to help this school continue to perform at the highest levels by reinforcing our core values: The LVA Way."

**Las Vegas Academy of the Arts**  
315 S. 7th Street  
Las Vegas 89101  
Complete details and calendar at [lasvegasacademy.net](http://lasvegasacademy.net).



*Above: On-Stage and Contemporary Voices singers perform at LVA's Vegas City Limits Concert*

*Below: Graphic design students work on the 30th Anniversary Mural Project*



# "The LVA Way"

## LVA Core Values

The LVA Way is the guiding principle of the Las Vegas Academy. It encompasses a list of values and an overarching philosophy that drives students and faculty alike. LVA alums often cite their commitment to the LVA Way as positively shaping their school experience.

**Invest in family and community.** A sense of belonging impacts physical and mental health.

**Build character.** Uphold integrity, respect, and honesty.

**Embrace a positive attitude.** Embellish with humor and fun.

**Achievement:** exceed mastery. Creativity, passion, and determination are catalysts.

**Defend truth, justice, and the LVA Way.**

## Motto

From Excellence to Eminence

## Slogan

Where Dreams Begin



*Cam O'bi, industry-acclaimed record producer*

## Just a Few Star Alums

- Molly Bernard, actress
- Leah Dizon, singer and model active in Japan
- Abe Goomroyen, jazz and symphony bass player
- Mathew Gray Gubler, actor
- Juianne Hugh, singer/dancer
- Alexandria Le, pianist and Notes with a Purpose founder
- Dasha Nekrasova, actress
- Ne-Yo, R&B artist
- Cam O'bi, pianist and Grammy-winning record producer
- Sizzy Rocket, singer
- Baron Vaughn, actor/comedian
- Rutina Wesley, actress
- Tyler Merritt, actor/founder of Tyler Merritt Project



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## MORE THAN A COFFEE SHOP

Dig It! Coffee Co. Builds A Community Embracing Inclusion, Equity, And Kindness.

By Debbie Hall

Photography courtesy of Dig It! Coffee Co.

As the Arts District pivots, transforms, and morphs after the pandemic, Dig It! Coffee Co. joins the area creating a thriving community serving “kindness, coffee, and inclusion.”

The vibe of the space in the lower level of the Share Downtown apartment complex is captured by Taylor Gardner Chaney, founder and owner of Dig It! Coffee Co. Its core is serving coffee and sweet drinks while fostering inclusion for adults with disabilities. Along with providing job training and mentorship for adults with disabilities in a positive work environment, guests share inclusion in the workplace.

A native Las Vegas, Chaney left briefly to attend the University of Nevada, Reno, to obtain her Bachelor of Arts in Communications and Journalism. When she returned to Southern Nevada, Chaney realized the differences



between her sister and herself.

“My sister and I are 16 months apart and entered adulthood together. However, I realized my choices and opportunities differed greatly from hers. I was deciding what college to attend, if I wanted to travel, and what job I wanted to hold. Her options were what program she wanted to attend all day,” explains Chaney. “She did attend one program for several years. However, my sister has higher needs since she is nonverbal and requires daily assistance. She became just a number, even though our family advocated for her. We wanted more stimulation, time with her peers, learning, and more inclusivity where she was out in the community.”

The roots of Dig It! Coffee Co. began when Chaney started The Garden Foundation nonprofit organization in 2018, inspired by her younger sister born with Down Syndrome. Chaney started her organization as an education-based program with recreational classes and vocational training serving adults with disabilities.

“My main goal was for people to grow and learn and not just sit in four walls of a daycare,” says Chaney.

She decided to create a coffee cart business to teach how to handle money, customer service, and communication skills. The coffee cart was made available at the offices where the foundation was located, and Chaney could wit-



ness the wonderful interactions between the people she was serving and the community. Customers would tell her how they enjoyed the engagement and experience with those operating the coffee cart. In fact, many discovered that buying a cup of coffee from those with disabilities was no different than buying one in a chain store.

“Buying coffee from us became a beautiful experience for the customers, and our people were so excited and wanted to work more within the community.”

Dig It! Coffee Co. continued to grow for the next four years as part of the work program expanding into farmers’ markets, catering, and pop-up coffee events. Her coffee distributors, Sin City



Coffee & Beverage, believed in her and the foundation and assisted in many ways, including providing free coffee.

The success of the coffee cart prompted her to envision growing the business on a bigger scale. Chaney began planning within the nonprofit while continuing to offer the other classes and programs.

She started looking for spaces because Chaney eventually wanted a brick-and-mortar store as a real home for the business. "I wanted to give our people a real job opportunity while paying all our staff competitive wages," she says.

Searching in all areas of Southern Nevada, Chaney's passion for making the next phase of the business happen brought her to the Arts District. She faced the challenges of the pandemic and locations falling through after she decided it was the right spot.

Then, she met with Derek Douglas (a.k.a. SNIPT), a Las Vegas artist and cofounder of Golden Fog Coffee, the previous tenant of the space she was considering.

"He created his baby, which was the coffee shop, but he was looking to explore other passions and do other things. He wanted to hear what I wanted to do. It was

meaningful for him to have someone else come in and take over his space," Chaney states.

She shared with him what they wanted to accomplish, and their mission was a social enterprise coffee shop that would employ staff with different abilities while paying equal wages. "He was blown away. He told me that if anyone was going to take over the space, he wanted it to be Dig It!"

Chaney would discover that the Arts District is the perfect place for the coffee shop, which has been proven true. Business owners in the district have been very







welcoming and so kind to her and her staff.

"This has been a very cool experience. Derek is also amazing and still a friend of mine. He created some of the artwork, still has a handprint in the space, and is a huge supporter of us," she says.

The mural of rapper 2 Chainz with the one-line lyric, "I'm different, yeah, I'm different," from his song *I'm Different* remains on the wall. Created by muralist Miscre8 and SNIPT, the mural remains unique to Chaney and the community.

There are challenges, including labor, for which Chaney was pre-

pared to offer support, modifications, and accommodation to all staff members by developing the business to plan for these considerations. The cost can also create challenges with supply chains and higher wholesale prices.

She also understands that this population wants to work. According to Chaney, Dig It! Coffee Co. is one of the few places with a mission to hire people with disabilities and provide a positive, inclusive environment paying

equitable wages. She receives many applications daily from people who want to work at Dig It! Coffee Co., but she only can offer a limited number of jobs and hours. Since the business is relatively new, she is working on establishing what could become a flagship location. Since Dig It! Coffee Co. is at staffing capacity, Chaney would like to expand to other areas in Nevada and the west coast to create more job opportunities.

"I don't think there is a solid footprint for our business model on the west coast, and I want to be on the forefront, as well as encourage other businesses to adopt a more inclusive work environment." She states that while this would be beneficial to the disability community, it is just as important to the community at large.

"I want them to see people with disabilities working and giving out coffee, or working in retail, or a gas station. This becomes normal, not a special or unique thing that Dig It! Coffee Co. does, but we start to give people with disabilities the opportunity to be included in society."

It is also essential to understand that Dig It! Coffee Co. hires people of different abilities and not just those with disabilities. "We hire a wide range of people being fully inclusive." Dig It! Coffee

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*"We hire a wide range of people being fully inclusive."*

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Co. is a partner of the Garden Foundation, which is still operating, and many of the people hired were trained at the foundation and also trained at the coffee shop.

Sin City Coffee & Beverage of Las Vegas supplies locally roasted, high-quality coffee. The signature latte is Dirt Cup Latte, a spin on dig it, reminiscent of chocolate pudding with chocolate cream-filled cookies while adding a kick of caffeine. Delight in dark chocolate, white chocolate, espresso, cookie crumble, whipped cream, and a gummy worm. There is also Peanut Butter Macha, Cookies-and-Cream cold brew, and an extensive coffee and beverage menu. Whiskful Thinking Cakes supplies sweet treats that bring back childhood memories, including ring dings and cake push pops. Other goodies are featured on the menu, with more items being added.

The coffee shop occupies 1,400 square feet and is surrounded by Instagrammable walls with seating for 40 at booths, low tops, and a communal table. Its modern aesthetic features splashes of neon colors, including a bright pink ceiling, the deep green of plants, and the shine of disco balls. Add large alternating-colored squares, two black-and-white checkered chairs, and a retro-looking TV. They celebrate the philosophy of "Not Typical" displayed in bright lights on an Instagram-worthy interior wall. The message of "serving kindness, coffee, and inclusion" is expressed from the latte art to cup sleeves.



Hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday (closed on Mondays). Third-party delivery services, including Uber Eats, Door Dash, and Grub Hub, will bring delicious coffee and other drinks. Dig It! Coffee Co. is located in the heart of Downtown, 1300 S. Casino Center Blvd. For more

info, visit [digitcoffeeco.com](http://digitcoffeeco.com) and follow on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok @ digitcoffeeco.

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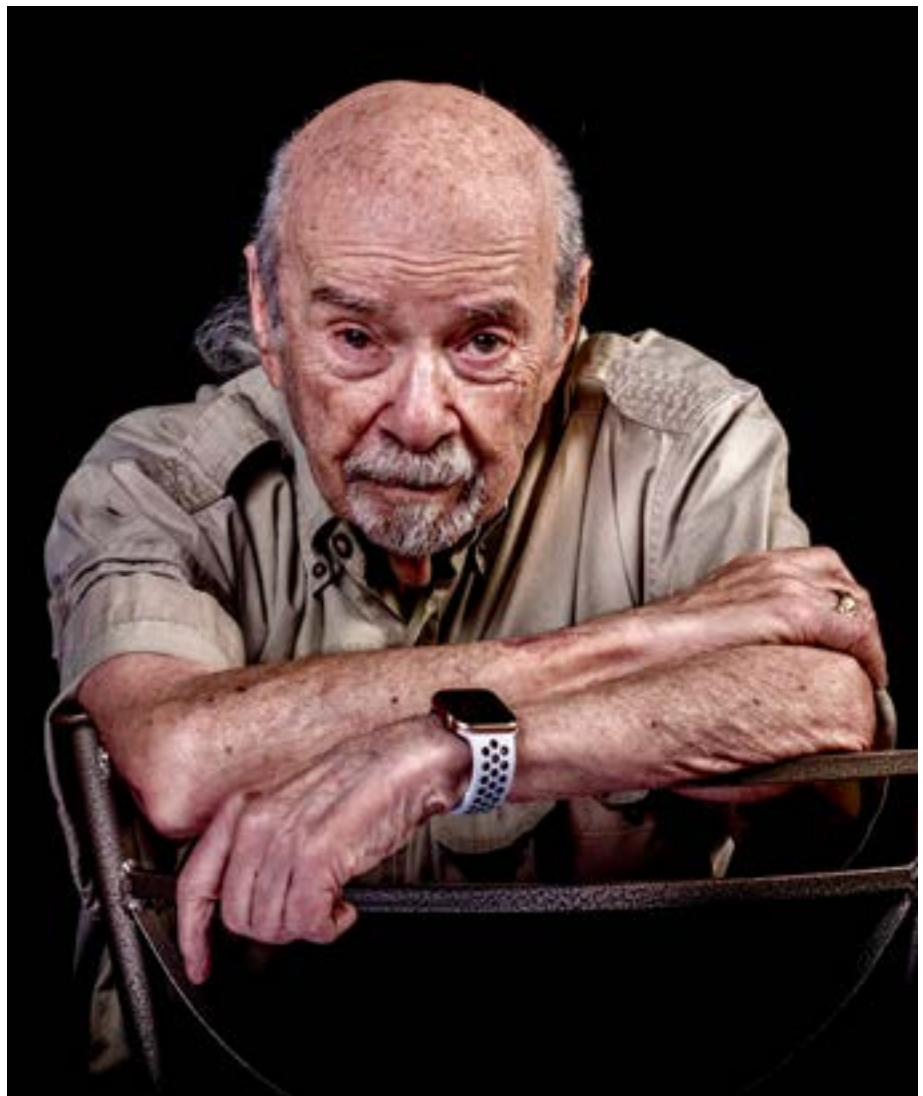
## Ed Foster – A Man of Grace

by Joan S. Peck  
Photography courtesy of Ed Foster

When anyone does something for 80 straight years, you know it is something they must love to do. And to do it successfully makes it more profound. Enter Ed Foster, the photographer extraordinaire. What started this photographer on his journey? The simple act of his brother leaving behind his camera when he went into the service. Ed picked it up and has never been without a camera since then.

Interestingly, when Ed entered the service, it wasn't his photography but his voice they wanted for the Air Force Band. Once out of service, a family friend opened the 1203 Club in Washington, D. C. where he sang in a trio. He soon discovered that was not what he wanted to do. Ed didn't feel as his friend Joe Williams did, that "I sing because I have to sing."

Ed has had no official training in photography, but before he went to college, he worked for



*Photo of Ed Foster*



*Antelope Canyon*



*Photo of Ben Vereen by Ed Foster*

Pagano's Studios in New York City. Using the GI Bill, Ed attended Brooklyn College in his hometown, where he was the photographer and co-editor of the college yearbook. Ed earned his Bachelor's degree and later his Master's degree in Fine Art. Ed laughs and says, "The total cost of my attending college was less than sending my son to his first summer camp."

Education has always been important to Ed. He was an Art teacher on Long Island for eight years, where he introduced

technology, language labs, and the first Apple computers in 1978. Later, I asked him what he was most proud of doing, "My impact on education. It was fun and innovative. When I left, they replaced me with four people." Ed continues, "There are so many distractions in education today. I would have all students put away their iPhones for one thing."

We spoke about how technology has changed the art of photography. "Digital cameras provide greater flexibility because you can immediately see if you got

the photo you want. So much handier than waiting it out in the darkroom to see what you've got. And the different computer applications give greater flexibility in the processing aspect. Even the cameras on the iPhones are great."

After visiting Las Vegas in 1992, Ed decided to live here and bought a house in 1994. He immediately became known for his photography of the stars. Ed lets them know he is available and, after seeing his work, is invited to be their photographer when they perform in Las Vegas. "So, I get to photograph them and see their show!"

He can be spotted sliding into position without bothering anyone around. Ed's sharp eye and quiet demeanor make it easy for the performers to befriend him. And he seems to know so many. What is his favorite star to work with? Clint Holmes. "He is a special performer. Earl Turner is another."

Ed also enjoyed photographing Ben Vereen and completed a book of his photos for him. "Every song he sings is a three-act play." Ed smiles.

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Ed's son David is a

*Opposite Page:*

*Above: Earl Turner*

*Bottom Left: Clint Holmes*

*Bottom Right: John Stamos*



professional graphic artist with his own Beatles Tribute band in New York City. His eldest grandson Reuben is studying art at New York College for graphic design. He created a design for Valentine's Day work as if it were the cover for the New Yorker Magazine, of which Ed is proud.

Camera-ready, Ed enjoys the desert area and loves how Mother Nature provides him with shots that make your heart twist with its beauty.

What fulfills Ed Foster these days? Ed chairs the "Joe Williams Every Day Foundation for Jazz. Clint Holmes, Naomi Mauro, and Michelle Johnson also serve on the board. "Last year, we gave \$100,000 to UNLV; this year, the foundation gave \$80,000 to UNLV and \$20,000 to the Jazz Outreach Initiative."



At 94, Ed Foster is not stopping from enjoying life and what he loves to do. "I love living in Las Vegas. I think it is the entertainment center of the country." And so says a man of grace.



*Above: Photo of Ed Foster at age 94 by Art Sachs Photography.*



*Above: Photo of Chadwick Johnson by Ed Foster*



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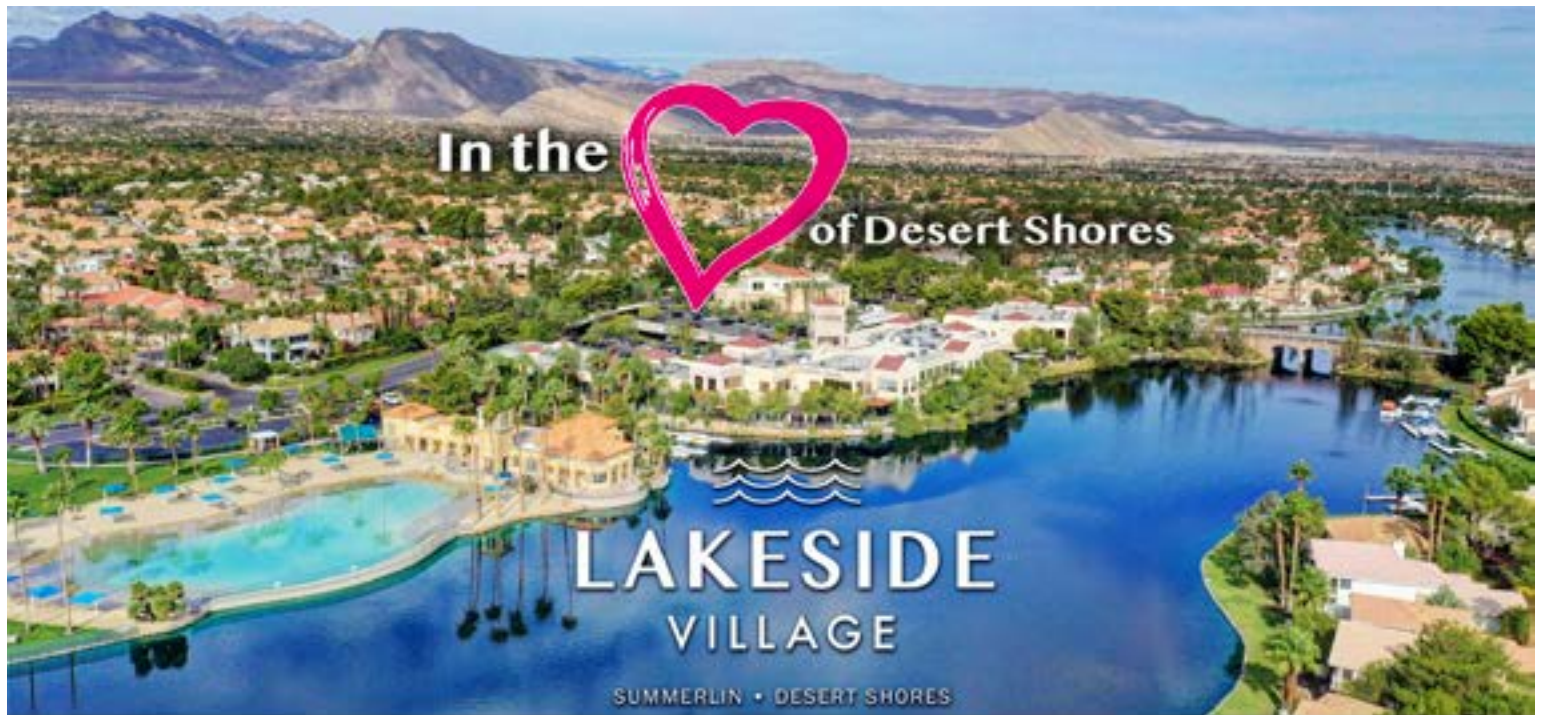
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## Hero School® and Tiger Todd Disrupt and Change the Modern Hero Movement.

By Debbie Hall / Photography courtesy of Hero School®

Heroes have always been part of the culture, demonstrating superhuman strength and performing almost impossible feats. Native Las Vegas Tiger Todd loved the heroes of movies and television but also appreciated people who helped stranded motorists, lost pets, and the fragile, considering those who helped as heroes. In the 1990s, he saw a real need to create a movement to help more people be heroic. As a result, Hero School® was developed as a leading Transformational Education Model that combines entrepreneurial principles to engage, motivate and reeducate disengaged and disconnected youth and adults.

While changing the trajectory of his own life and the lives of others, Todd created ways to rapidly and humanely extinguish the culture of homelessness. Intervention teams engage, ignite, and sustain struggling youth and adults as they rise out of homelessness and

repeat history. Hero School delivers initiatives to enlighten, change mindsets and ignite lifelong learning. The values of intrapreneurship empower the youth and adults to become the next heroes for their families, companies, and communities.

Hero School Strategic Interventions, Breakthrough Academies, and Character Change® Experiences have helped thousands of youth and adults overcome impossible odds to become learners, earners, contributors, and heroes for their families and communities. Hero School Community Initiatives combines experts and entrepreneurs with cutting-edge curricula, strategic resources, and dynamic experiences. Hero School is a learning engine as a school of psychology.

Todd started as an entrepreneur, making the income to fund the next stage of his life. His father was also an entrepreneur, and circumstances propelled Todd

to follow his father's lead. Todd was hit by a drunk driver at age four and spent two months in a body cast. His father would pick Todd up from school and take him to work. Todd would develop friendships with his father's customers. When he started to attend school, he wanted to learn from the teachers instead of playing with other children.

Having sold the electronics company he founded in the early 1990s, Todd knew what he wanted to do with the next phase of his life. He wanted to bring heroism back as he saw it—small acts such as helping someone change a flat tire.

"I am trying to inspire the community in Las Vegas," he says.

At the time, Todd had written a substantial check to an organization with a mission to help people experiencing homelessness. He went to Ethel Pearson Park, where the organization served people

experiencing homelessness, and counted 1,854 people lined up to receive food donations, paid for by his philanthropy. While Todd understood people need to eat, he did not see how receiving food would help these people out of the cycle of homelessness.

"I interviewed the line, and I kept hearing the same four reasons pop up as I interviewed everyone lined up to get food. I found four things about the way they thought and answered questions that would disqualify them from working in any business I owned, or certainly never own their own business," Todd explains.

The four habits or mindsets include begging, blaming, horizontal learning, and talking back/telling a story about why to remain homeless. The antidotes to each are Tiger Todd's Four Laws Of Entrepreneurship™:

- Add Value First
- Take The Blame
- Learn Vertically
- Do It To Prove it

On a frigid day in December 1995 (the following week), Todd rented a stage and 300 chairs, and a massive sound system capable of reaching deep into the neighborhood from Ethel Pearson Park. He recruited 20 friends and clients for the first outreach, wrote another check to the organization, and gathered the homeless.

That would be the birth of Hero School.

"I wanted to be sure we were



*This is one of the many homeless camps in Las Vegas where Hero School teams reach out.*



*The Fast Five offers five programs including Suit UP™ Experience to acclimate participants to the corporate world work.*

helping the homeless in the right way," he says. If someone feeds people, they must come back to be fed. If they learn how to feed themselves, most will feed themselves."

Anyone wanting a donation was required to attend the 90-minute class before receiving food, clothing, and goods. Todd would continue to do this for over three years and stated that he helped most homeless individuals attending the Hero School in the park.

In 1998, Todd was approached to speak to children in a school assembly about his Hero School, and he admits he was very hesitant. Finally, however, he decided to talk to students from his old neighborhood at a junior high school, even though he had not attended that school. Its mascot was a tiger, so he felt an affinity with it.

"I spoke at this school and told the students about my experience volunteering in the park and how I helped the homeless change. A little girl jumped up from the back row and shouted, 'That is not true. All homeless people have mental problems.' I just discovered the four habits and the ways to change the attitude of a homeless person. Now, here is a girl attending the seventh grade trying to tell me about homelessness."

He was amazed that no teacher admonished or corrected her. After speaking and interacting with these students for about 30 minutes, Todd recognized that many



*Tiger Todd, far right, founder of Hero School, speaks with younger people about Hero School and its goals.*



*These are just a few of the people living new lives after attending Hero School.*

of these children had already learned the four habits of creating a homeless person in the seventh grade.

While Todd started this journey volunteering to make his community a better place to live, this experience inspired him to propel himself into a school setting and develop Hero School.

"So many people ask me why I do this, and I tell everyone I can't NOT do it."

The Fast Five is a community initiative part of the nonprofit side of Hero School as an accelerated learning program at the speed of movies (two hours) to create character change. The Fast Five community initiatives are five

ways the nonprofit arm (formed in 1999 after the success in the park) can help get the homeless off the street. This includes the Breakout Academies™, Nutrition Intervention, speedy ID™ Days, Suit UP™ Experience, and Employee Engagement.

It was designed to help other nonprofits continue what they do best and provide a solution. For example, shelters can continue providing a place, but the Fast Five is designed to activate the human coming to the shelter to escape the cycle and not have to return to it.

While the program was around in the 1990s and 2000s, Todd explains that society has changed today with new obstacles and mental barriers to overcome and has adjusted Hero School to incorporate these changes.

The programs are designed to deliver the human ignition process with breakthrough academies. The people who need it the most are those struggling and repeat-



*From left: Geoff Powell, Kevin Anderson, Tiger Todd and LaQuan Phillips demonstrate the power of Hero School.*

ing history. Employees are now called intrapreneurs, and two weeks are invested in employees as their lives are changed, and they expect something (paycheck) with effort.

“I realized that schools have become more socially centered. Now that I do Hero School experiences for universities, I am fascinated by the lack of respect for the professor and the system of education by the students. Today’s technology, with the iPad generation (those who grew up

with technology), is socially dependent [on technology] or what we call horizontal learning, which is the third habit of homelessness. They are so socially dependent on people their own age and afraid to learn from someone five years older than them.”

According to Todd, it is essential to understand that being unhoused differs from homelessness. People look at extrinsic factors of “stuff.”

When partnering with Catholic Charities and the Hero School programs, “I was speaking to 500 kids in middle school in their gym. Observing the same behavior of men in their 40s and 50s that I just witnessed in a kid in the 6th, 7th, or 8th grade shows there is this comprehension gap, this connection to what it takes to be an adult. The time to give this breakthrough would be in middle school.”

He would ask the men he was working with, who were homeless, unhoused, and gone



*Hero School invests in everyone attending their programs to get off the streets and live up to their potential.*

through tragedy, “If you could get back all the money that has gone through your hands during your lifetime and it would miraculously accumulate in a pile in this room, how big would your pile be?” The men would grunt with some answering with low figures. Others would say over \$1 million. The average amount stated by the men during the eight-year period he worked with the population at Catholic Charities would be \$750,000 per person.

“I would tell them that they are great at getting money, but they sucked at keeping money,” Todd says. “I would then say, let’s work on how to keep money and get it to work for you.” As Todd explains, “this is a great exercise and shows that we are not defined by what we have.” He aims to help people define what they have on the inside, not what they have or don’t have.

“There are a million ways to lose a house. But there are only four habits from my science repeated and proven over 27 years that create someone who can’t keep a house, job, or spouse. It doesn’t matter what we give them or what they earn until we neutralize those four habits. Unfortunately, they will end up in the same place even sooner next time.”

Most of what Todd has learned from speaking at public schools over the past 15 years is that people tend to think the child in 8th grade is the same kid in 3rd grade. Something happens that changes with the human. Mythology, religion, history, and movies



*Tiger Todd speaks about the Hero School to an attentive audience.*



*Tiger Todd, founder of Hero School, is surrounded by students and teachers as he speaks about Hero School in middle schools.*

prove that humans split into two people. The child in 6th or 7th grade between 12 to 13 years now has the ability to become Bruce Wayne/Batman or Diana Prince/Wonder Woman. These two sides of a person need both sides nourished and developed, or that person could end up either living well below their ca-

pabilities or homeless. The Hero School is working to develop both sides and bring out the best in everyone.

For more info, visit [heroschool.us](http://heroschool.us) and follow them on Facebook and Twitter @ HeroSchool and Instagram @ heroschool.us.



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# KEIKO MATSUI BRIGHTENS THE WORLD WITH 30TH ALBUM *EUPHORIA*

By Sheryl Aronson

Photography courtesy of Sheryl Aronson (Sasaphotos) and Raj Naik

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Keiko Matsui released her 30th album, *Euphoria*, with Shanachie Entertainment on March 31st, 2023. Once again, the inspiration for her music originated from a deeply spiritual place where she surrenders to the divine as she guides the musical phrases that pour through her fingers and onto the keyboard. As an artist, her goal is not only to create compositions that enchant the listeners' ears but also to deliver a healing message for global harmony.

"This album is about the hope we all carry inside of us," said Matsui. "I have this dream where we can each cherish our happiness and learn to accept and care for one another. When I tour the world and witness how my music cuts through our differences and connects everyone, it makes me feel euphoric."

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Keiko always strives for artistic and personal development, stretching the boundaries of her artistry. Devoted to her fans worldwide, she begins each show by dedicating the concert to everyone attending. On April 8th, I attended the sold-out performance at Santa Fe Station in Las Vegas.

Matsui crafted transcendent melodies that cast an enchanting spell as she performed compositions from the newest release and other classic tunes. When she sat at the piano, the music flowed out of her powerful hands with intensity and precision. The band that evening consisted of Dave Karasony on drums, Rico Belled on bass, Joao Pedro Mourao on guitar, and Brandon Fields on saxophone/flute, plus a surprise friend appearance by Paul Taylor on sax.

I had the pleasure to talk with Keiko Matsui about her newest album *Euphoria* over the phone.

Chic Compass: Keiko, your 30th album *Euphoria* is coming out on March 31st. Congratulations! How did you conjure up the name?

Keiko Matsui: The word *Euphoria* appeared during the recording progress. I researched this word, and I knew that it would represent the energy of the album.

Chic Compass: I have your quote: "I have this dream where we can each cherish our happiness and learn to accept and care for one another." As a psychotherapist, that's my goal for every client I



*Euphoria* album cover photo with Keiko Matsui by Raj Naik

work with - be happy and love yourself. Talk about what you meant.

Keiko Matsui: I feel we've been going through difficult times, especially the last two to three years. So much death and sadness have been pervasive throughout the world. People have lost friends and family members to Covid, and there's been a civil war in Ukraine. Although there has been so much sorrow, I love that humanity moves forward, finding hope. I'm truly inspired by hope amid tragedy. I wish that we will have a new chapter on the planet. I want to focus on each person finding their happiness and, at the same time, thinking about

others as well. This will unite the world.

Chic Compass: You've been quite prolific in your career, composing music for 30 albums. What inspires you?

Keiko Matsui: Music connects us beyond our differences. My friends and fans are from different countries, and even if they are against each other politically, we will connect through music. I'm so grateful to have fans from many different parts of the world, and because of their continued support, I have progressed this far in my career. When my fans support my music, it's the treasure of my life.



*Above from Left: Paul Taylor, sax; Joao Pedro Mourao, guitar; Keiko Matsui, keys; Brandon Fields, sax; Rico Belled, bass; Dave Karasony, drums. Photo by Sheryl Aronson (Sasaphotos)*

Chic Compass: You are working with top-notch musicians on your album, like Randy Brecker, Mike Stern, John Beasley, Lalah Hathaway, and Kirk Whalum, to name a few. You performed with Randy Brecker at Cerritos Performing Arts Center last year. He plays flugelhorn on the song “Neo” from the new album.

Keiko Matsui: I have admired his work over the years and invited him to be a special guest performer at Cerritos last year. We also did a special concert at the Sony Hall in New York when my previous album *Echo* was released. This time, when the bassline and melody came to me, I thought it

would be cool to have Randy play the song. The bassline came first, and then the melody. He chose the flugelhorn instead of the trumpet, and his proficiency made “Neo” powerful.

Chic Compass: Yes, the flugelhorn brings a luscious tone, but it doesn’t take away from the in-

tensity of his riffing with you back and forth, building to a climax.

Keiko Matsui: The band was amazing too. I was planning to fade out, but I couldn’t stop playing, and the band kept right on playing even though the chart was written: “Repeat and fade out.” When we finished – by cre-

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**“For each song on *Euphoria*,  
I thought about who the best  
musician would be to express the  
soul of the melody.”**

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*Photo of Keiko Matsui by Sheryl Aronson (Sasaphotos)*

ating the ending instinctually- my co-produce/manager Bud Harner decided to use everything!

Chic Compass: You chose Mike Stern on guitar, who played with the original Blood Sweat and Tears. Why did you choose Mike to perform on the song "The Choice."

Keiko Matsui: For each song on *Euphoria*, I thought about who the best musician would be to express the soul of the melody. As I heard the contours of the song "The Choice," I remembered the electric guitar playing by Mike Stern. I had heard him play with Richard Bona. Although he was very quiet and gentle when I met him personally, I knew that his sound on the guitar was electrify-

ing and unique and that it would be a very interesting combination with this fun song.

Chic Compass: I love the compelling sound of Gregoire Maret on the harmonica complimenting Lalah Hathaway's vocals on "Love and Nothing Less."

Keiko Matsui: The first time I collaborated with Gregoire was on my album *Journey to the Heart*. He played the song "Casablanca," and he was amazing. When I completed composing the melody for the vocal song "Love and Nothing Less" and Lalah Hathaway completed the lyrics and vocals, I imagined Gregoire playing a beautiful solo on the harmonica that would be the perfect addition to the song.

Chic Compass: Lalah Hathaway's voice is haunting in that song and, at the same time, sensual and inviting. What was the story behind working with this Grammy-winning artist?

Keiko Matsui: When I received the verse melody (that came into my head), I immediately thought of Lalah Hathaway. So, before asking Lalah, I completed the melody and asked Bud to reach out to her to sing and write the lyrics. Lalah immediately agreed to collaborate. Strangely enough, when I asked Lalah to check the key to the song before we recorded it, she said the key was perfect. She then asked me what kind of story or feeling was behind the music. I wrote her an e-mail explaining this was an expression of

my emotion about human beings moving forward despite all the sorrow in the world. She wrote me back ... "I gotcha, Keiko. I understand. All your thoughts and words are beautiful." Then she came up with lyrics that truly expressed my soul's intention on a very deep level.

Chic Compass: For your title track, "Euphoria," you asked the brilliant

composer/pianist John Beasley to collaborate on this piece. Did you think his extensive background in orchestration would enhance the complexity of the music?

Keiko Matsui: I met John Beasley as the music director in Istanbul when UNESCO and Herbie Hancock put on International Jazz Day. I admired his work, from playing and arranging everything

so deeply and beautifully. When I received the melody of "Euphoria," I knew this would be the title track because I loved it - and the infusion of melody, chorus, and complex rhythms poured into my composing. This composition needed expert handling.

Somehow a miraculous coincidence occurred. When I wrote John asking if he could arrange two songs for the new album, we found out that we would both be in Amsterdam on the same day. On the day of my arrival in Amsterdam for the Dave Koz cruise, John Beasley was performing that night with the Metropole Orchestra. He agreed to chat with me after the concert. While listening to his arrangements that evening and hearing some with a Latin flavor song, I realized John was the exact fit for *Euphoria* and *Legend of Yaguarón*. I asked him if he had the time to be in the studio for the recording dates. John said the tracking date probably wouldn't work, but he could return to LA and overdub the strings. He made a beautiful canvas for these two songs.

Chic Compass: Where did you record *Euphoria*?

Keiko Matsui: We were at the United Hollywood Recording Studio for tracking.

Chic Compass: How many musicians do you have playing live?

Keiko Matsui: Most people are recording at home and sending each other tracks, but especially after this pandemic/crazy time,



Photo of Keiko Matsui by Raj Naik

I just wanted to see everyone! It was very hard to organize the schedule because everybody started touring again last year, but we set the time at the beginning of July.

Bud Harner, my co-producer and manager, made a three-group schedule tracking date in three days. There were six of us, and we did five songs with Alex Albass, Gregg Bissonette-drums, Tony Pulizzi-guitar, Luis Conte-percussion, and Ron Pedley-keys; and another four songs with Jimmy Branly-drums, Michael Thompson-guitar, Jimmy Johnson-bass, Ron Pedley-keys, and Luis Conte-percussion. The final set was with my band members, Jimmy Branly-drums, Rico Belled-bass, JP, Mourao-guitar, and Luis Conte-percussion.

Chic Compass: Of course, you'll feature some of your new music at concerts beginning in April 2023. What can the audience expect at your concert in Las Vegas at the Santa Fe Station?

Keiko Matsui: I'll be there on April 8th, and I love that venue. When I come to Vegas, I feel that happy, spirited energy from the audience. Las Vegas is such a special place because I can meet many fans from different parts of the world who sometimes plan their vacations around seeing me in concert.

On April 29th, I will be at the Cerritos Performing Arts Center, where I'm putting on a special show to celebrate this newborn album. My touring schedule is on

my website at [Keikomatsui.com](http://Keikomatsui.com).

Chic Compass: What else would you like to say about your new album *Euphoria*?

Keiko Matsui: On the front page of my website, people can preview 30 seconds of all the songs on the album. The actual CD is

available on Amazon and will be on sale on March 31st.

I love to dedicate my shows to all the people in the audience and share the unique energy that each song encompasses. It is an honor to share this experience with people worldwide.



*Photo of Keiko Matsui by Raj Naik*





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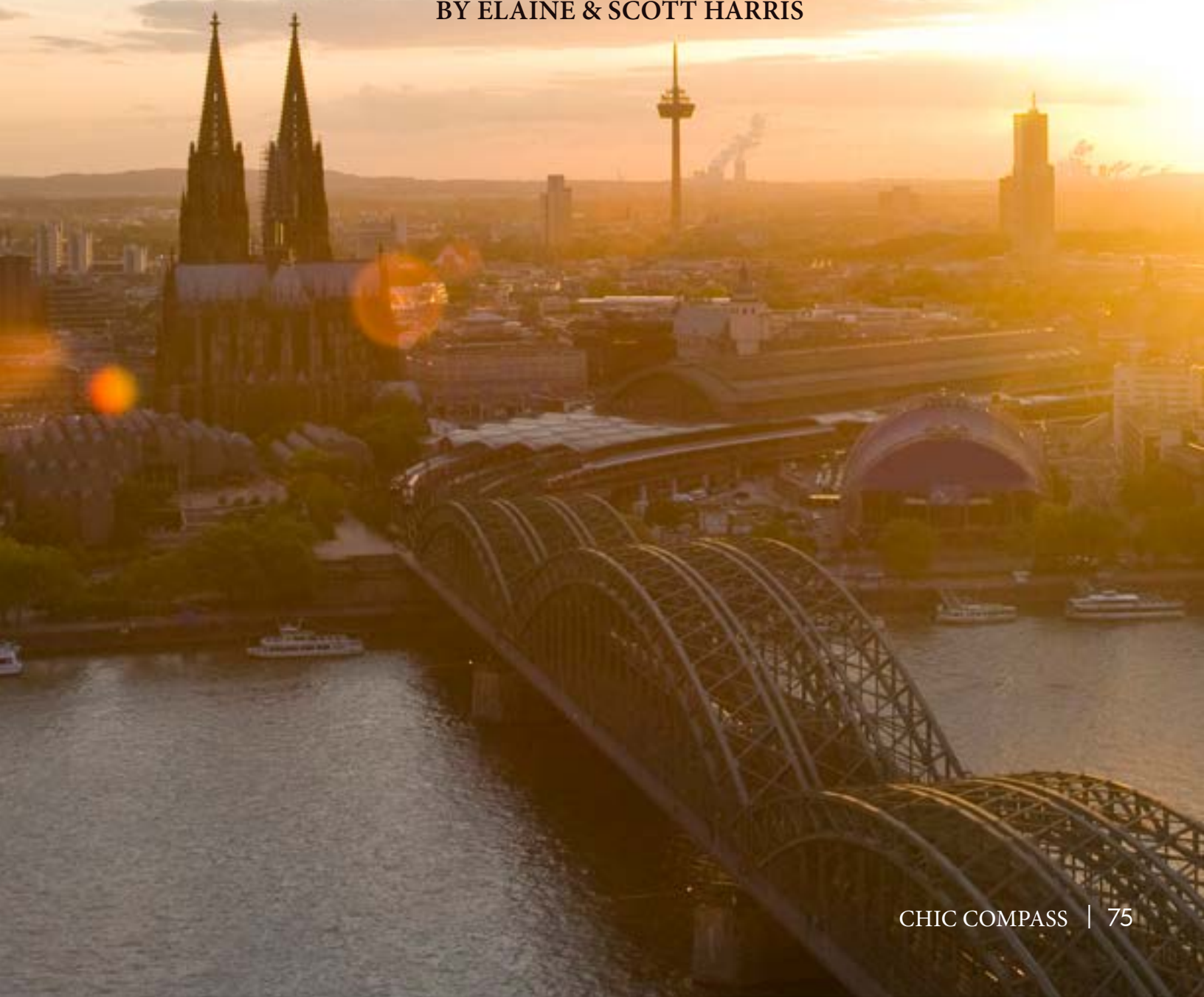
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# GERMANY

Germany's Many Diverse Experiences Place High  
Amongst European and World Tourist Destinations

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BY ELAINE & SCOTT HARRIS



Calling all travelers! Germany awaits those eager to explore culture, nature, and the culinary arts. We were privileged to travel to Essen, Germany, to join top representatives of the international travel industry and media from 36 countries and attend the 49th Germany Travel Mart™ (GTM) organized by the German National Tourist Board (GNTB). The GTM is the most important sales event for incoming German tourism and is held annually as a Green Meeting by the GNTB in cooperation with changing areas and cities. For three days, attendees took a deep dive to discover Germany's latest trends, developments, and tourism products. They traveled to nearby Düsseldorf and Cologne to immerse themselves in the region.

Essen is in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The ninth-largest city in Germany, with a population of around 590,000 people, has a long history of being the center of coal and steel production for decades. Today, the city has undergone a significant economic and cultural transformation, focusing on promoting sustainable development, innovation, and creativity.

Our home base was The ATLANTIC Congress Hotel, the event hot spot for the Ruhr Metropolis of Essen. It offers 248 stylish rooms and suites, 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> of updated conference space, fantastic cuisine, and a unique rooftop terrace offering guests a modern place to stay in Essen. Restaurant CUXX, located near the lobby,



is innovative and down to earth, serving high-quality, fresh, regional dishes prepared creatively and passionately.

Germany has excelled coming out of two years of a global chaotic time. International tourism increased in 2022 to 917 million arrivals (101.6%). It was also Europe's second most popular destination, with 46.5 million trips in 2022. (Second only to Spain with 63.2 million) International markets have also started to get back on track, with the United States leading the way with 2,522,000 trips in 2022. Of course, this also led

to a 119% increase in hotel stays. Culture is significant to Germany, and it shows the county is ranked first among Europeans as a cultural destination. With the country's historic buildings, culture, vibrant city life, and focus on sustainability, it's certainly no surprise this ancient culture is thriving in 2023 and beyond.

Exploring Essen, we found it to be very diverse in its offerings. The Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex is a must-stop, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, unique event space, art museum, and houses various

restaurant venues. Nearby the Museum Folkwang showcases a wide range of art from different periods, including Picasso, Renoir, Monet, Gauguin, and Van Gough, and is worth a half-day visit at the very least.

Pro Tip: Enjoy lunch at restaurant Eolola for authentic regional cuisine inside the museum Folkwang.

One can enjoy numerous hiking trails and the Grugapark, a large park with gardens, lakes, and recreational facilities. When dining in Essen, you will find various options to suit all tastes and budgets, ranging from traditional German cuisine to international dishes.

Pro Tip: For a Michelin Experience, Kettner's Kamota, curated by Chef Jurgen Kettner, brings together "New Austrian meets Asia" with a brilliant menu bringing flavors of his native Austria and Asian Influences that earned him a Michelin Star.

A quick train ride will find you in Cologne (Köln in German), the fourth largest city in Germany, with a population of over 1 million people in the metropolitan area. This ancient city is a major cultural and economic center known for its historical landmarks, museums, and vibrant nightlife. The town is situated on the Rhine River and is home to the famous Cologne Cathedral, a towering Gothic structure that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is one of the largest and most famous cathedrals in the world.





The cathedral is a masterpiece of Gothic architecture, with its soaring spires and intricate stone carvings. It is an important symbol of Christianity in Germany and a cultural and architectural treasure. Construction of the cathedral began in 1248 and was completed in 1880, spanning over six centuries.

The cathedral is also home to several important religious relics, including the Shrine of the Three Kings, which is said to contain the remains of the Magi who visited the infant Jesus. The cathedral attracts millions of visitors annually, who admire its beauty and rich history.

It's all about the beer culture here, as it is home to several breweries and hosts a large annual beer festival called Oktoberfest. The

city is also famous for its Christmas markets, which attract visitors worldwide during the holiday season.

An easy day trip from Essen, explore Düsseldorf, located on the banks of the historic Rhine River. It is the capital city of North Rhine-Westphalia and has a population of around 600,000 people, making it the seventh largest city in Germany.

The city is renowned globally for its fashion industry, art scene, and nightlife. Additionally, it is home to many museums, galleries, and theaters, including the famous Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen and the Deutsche Oper am Rhein. The city is also renowned for its annual carnival celebrations, which attract visitors from all over the world. It is also the economic center of Germany, with a strong focus on the banking and finance sectors. The



city is home to the headquarters of several major companies, including Henkel, Metro AG, and E.ON. Because of its location in the center of Europe, its excellent transportation links, with a major airport and several train stations connecting it to other parts of Germany and Europe, make it the Hub of Europe.

Walking around Dusseldorf, we were astounded to find Düsseldorf is home to a significant Japanese community. After the Second World War, Japan's expertise in manufacturing and engineering was sought after, and in the 1950s, Mitsubishi, the Japanese car company, set up manufacturing in the surrounding area. As a result, the city has many Japa-

nese businesses and cultural institutions. Little Tokyo, located in the Stadtmitte district of Düsseldorf, is a small, vibrant area with numerous Japanese restaurants, cafes, and shops. Japan Day is the largest Japanese-annual celebratory event of all things Japanese, including culinary offerings, music, and martial arts demonstrations.

Additionally, the Japanese school was established in 1971 and serves the Japanese community in Düsseldorf and the surrounding areas. The school offers classes from kindergarten to high school and follows the Japanese education system. A short walk found us at the EKO-Haus der japanischen Kultur. This cultural center is located in the Grafenberg neighbor-

hood of Düsseldorf and provides a variety of lessons and events related to Japanese culture, including calligraphy, tea ceremony, and martial arts.

Neustadt an der Weinstraße is a town in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate in southwestern Germany known for its wine production. Neustadt an der Weinstraße has a population of around 53,000 and is the largest town in the Mittelhaardt region. The village is known for its historic center, which features many well-preserved buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries, including the Hambach Castle, considered the bastion of the German democracy movement due to the Hambacher Fest, a procession symbolizing German unity. Neustadt an der Weinstraße is also a popular tourist destination due to its location in the Palatinate Wine Region, which features numerous vineyards, wineries, and culinary culture.

Dining options are very diverse. Stop into Hambel's Restaurant—an award-winning restaurant offering a modern take on traditional Palatinate cuisine, using fresh, local ingredients. The menu changes frequently to reflect the seasons and availability of ingredients. For classic German dishes, look no further than Zur Kanne. This cozy restaurant is in the heart of Neustadt's old town. It serves traditional German dishes like schnitzel and sausages and regional specialties like liver dumplings and Palatinate-style sauerbraten. The Oenophiles will enjoy the family-run Weinhaus







Henninger. The venue is known for its extensive wine list featuring local wines from the surrounding vineyards. The list of options features traditional Palatinate dishes like potato soup, liver dumplings, and fried potatoes with bacon and onions. For lighter fare, Café Vogel is for you. This charming café in Neustadt's center serves coffee, cakes, and light meals. The menu includes salads, sandwiches, quiches, homemade cakes, and pastries.

Pro Tip: Discover one of the region's most distinguished wine cellars, with a collection numbering thousands of bottles. Here you can find different vintages of Château Montelena next to rare varieties from Colgin to Abreus wine. These fine wines can stand next to a Vertikale from Dominus. The finest Napa cabernets remarkably compare with a mature Premier Crus des Paulliac.

No matter where you dine in Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, you'll surely enjoy the region's delicious food and wine.

Visiting Germany and getting a master class on where it fits into the European and Global travel industry enlightened us. Our brief stay enriched us and cultivated a desire to return to this brilliant country in the continent's heart. As actress Claire Danes said, "Germany is fascinating. It's a rich landscape to film and dramatize." If you are filming or looking for a beautiful place to vacation, Germany has been Europe's number-one cultural destination

for over a decade. With a focus on sustainability, safety, and easy accessibility, more people are willing to discover the pleasures of travel again, especially in this historic, stunning picturesque landscape with 51 UNESCO world heritage sites and more ways to stay, play and learn, prompting many to stay longer and savor the moment. We were glad we did.



# Thank you



On behalf of *Chic Compass Magazine* and  
Forgotten Song Foundation, we would like to  
thank Anna Gomes and Via Brasil for hosting our  
Viva Las Vegas launch party.



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# FANS OF JIMMY CENTURY

## Music that Defies Earthbound Expectations

Article by Samuel Novak

Photography courtesy of FANS OF JIMMY CENTURY





Imagine a phantasmagorical city populated by music artists of the past and present. Band members of Vegas-based FANS OF JIMMY CENTURY ["FOJC"] would most likely have neighbors along the lines of the B-52s and David Bowie. Their domicile might resemble something constructed by Edward Scissorhands...with interior designs by Joey Heatherton.

Whether or not you're familiar with FANS OF JIMMY CENTURY, it should be clear from the above description that the psychedelic musical group cannot easily be categorized. Lead singer Alicia Perrone and bassist Victor James have formed their own special universe, and everyone is invited to join in on the fun.

Perrone and James possess the ability to incorporate wildly varied genres into a wholly unique soundscape. Elements of rock, funk, disco, punk, pop, soul, and even rap are sprinkled with a hint of Prince protege Sheila E., delivering an aural confection that's unmistakably retro yet cutting-edge. In other words, utterly timeless.

Outlandish as they are original, the former Californians are the epitome of "cool," dripping with

*At Left: FANS OF JIMMY CENTURY band members Alicia Perrone and Victor James*

sex appeal and awash in garish color. It's a style that they live and breathe...because nothing can be ordinary in the FOJC realm...not even their name.

CHIC COMPASS: Who is Jimmy Century, and how did this entity come to represent your band?

Alicia: "Jimmy Century is a ruthless, ridiculous cult leader, and we are his devotees. Our San Francisco Bay area was addicted to the Jim Jones/Jonestown massacre story. Even though it happened in 1978, it seemed like our circle was still discussing it well into the 90s. When FOJC was formed as a duo in 2008, we started telling everyone that we were a cult, a church, and we'd refer to fans of

the music as the "Dearly Beloved" - a nod to Prince."

Victor: "We've always had male names for our bands, James Bond spy types. We were discovered by Ric Ocasek of "The Cars" and signed to Elektra Records as a band called "Simon Stinger." "Jimmy Century" sounded more futuristic as we headed into the electronic/dance genre. We were basically doing something like "Frankie Goes to Hollywood" ...that's where the "Fans of" came from...like a cult. Alicia gave Jimmy a whole backstory."

Alicia: "The JC in Jimmy Century wasn't by accident. It was a play on Jesus Christ, and we thought we had created this whole new

provocative world of our own... next-level acid trip (laughter). Our email address at the time was fansofjc@aol.com. We started hearing from people thinking our name stood for "Fans of Jesus Christ" or "Friends of the Jewish Community."

CHIC COMPASS: A live performance by FOJC is much more than just a concert. It's a surreal experience beyond sound and movement, creating an infectious energy that takes the audience on a heady trip. But what is the source of that power? Does it come from the cosmos? Perhaps it's a spiritual thing?

Alicia: "More like infected energy. For me, the power that drives



the show is always dictated at the beginning. Drawing the audience closer and making everyone laugh from the start is what empowers me. My soul food is the need to break the ice so the music has no barrier. We can convince everyone at that moment that they wouldn't want to be anywhere else."

Victor: "I think it comes from having so much experience growing up on the stage. I started touring when I was fourteen, so it feels very natural. That's all we've ever done as a couple. Most of our lives have been on the stage, so I think that created a lot of momentum."

Alicia: "Seems like the most basic things are what elevates it to a spiritual performance, the point when no one in that room is self-conscious, everyone is no holds barred. The cosmic part is the scene that's created, the electricity flowing from one person to the next. Every person performs at our show.... if we do OUR part right."

CHIC COMPASS: Before the MTV era, music was rarely a visual medium aside from live performances. It took pioneers like Duran Duran, Culture Club, and Peter Gabriel to meld sight and sound into a new art form. It's one in which you clearly thrive. What artists served as your muses?

Victor: "Prince, Duran Duran, KISS, Earth, Wind, & Fire, Power Station, and Michael Jackson. We've played with show people focused on production and cre-



ating a real connection with audiences. From No Doubt, Lady Gaga, and Berlin to rock bands like Green Day, Smash Mouth, Goo Goo Dolls, and Suicidal Tendencies. Being on stage with performers from that era gave us a lot of confidence."

Alicia: "Prince, Oingo Boingo, Bowie, Lyle Lovett, Divinyls, Deee-Lite, The Gap Band. Larger-than-life characters, distinct voices, and colorful personalities appealed to me the most. I think the attitude we've always had throughout the years is particularly relevant now with social media and everyone putting themselves out there. Also trying to bring our music videos to life on stage."

CHIC COMPASS: Along with being a living space, your home is a monument to musical icons, a video and music studio, a performance venue, and a party hotspot. It's also a Bat Cave of sorts, where alter-egos can come out to play. Prince had the legendary "Paisley Park." Does your sanctuary have a name...and is it alive?

Alicia: "Oh boy, that's a loaded question! Holy Moly, yes. Her name is Lacy Lane, and though there are other houses on Lacy Lane, SHE is the one and only Lacy Lane! We had thought about having a portrait of her in the entrance, but I think the face would have to have that incredi-

ble noir shadow lighting because no physical features would do her any justice."

Victor: "The house is very much alive. A case in point, a lady came to do a walk-through to rent it for an event. She had a snooty attitude, so Lacy pushed her off the step. We have it on security camera."

Alicia: "Lacy's a celebrity amongst the Peerspace crowd. She pays her own mortgage by hosting events and receptions. She will also be the site of our 70s Love Boat-themed wedding ceremony slash music video this year on 11/11."

"She's our business partner and has her own song - "Feels Like Home" by Sigala, Fuse ODG, and Sean Paul. We have tons of footage where we're just dancing around the living room singing that song to her."

Victor: "When I was a kid, my aunt encouraged us to play with our imaginary friends. I never lost that ability. I see ghosts in here all the time, having a party, dressed in 70s clothing. Alicia can't see it, but she can hear it. Lacy's larger-than-life personality also led to her hosting the Nominees Dinner last year when the Grammys were in Vegas. She is an icon."

CHIC COMPASS: On the surface, Fans of Jimmy Century may appear to be "just a band." Those who look deeper might suspect you to be time travelers or visitors from another dimension. Will we ever find out the truth?







*Above: Alicia Perrone and Victor James at Grant Philip's Las Vegas Showgirl Museum*

Alicia: "Ric Ocasek used to call us aliens. He said we had a 7th, 8th, and 9th alien sense that would take us to the outer limits to meet our own kind and take over the world."

Victor: "No. Haha. We must remain shrouded in mystery!"

Alicia: "Covered in bees! Lucky for us, we found fellow time travelers, our dynamite rock star drummer, Chicago-born Mike Long, and his foxy wife Ivy, one of our reps... a real mover and shaker! I think they're from the same man-

ic planet that we are. They have embraced the shape-shifting and have created alter egos of their own."

CHIC COMPASS: Speaking of alter egos...David Bowie introduced "Ziggy Stardust," George Clinton gave birth to "Dr. Funkenstein," and Prince had a soul filled with identities like "Gemini," "Alexander Nevermind," and the gender-fluid "Camille." Who lives inside your secret closets?

Alicia: "Such a great question... it's almost like you're in our heads."

We've got a full house over here, more like a halfway house. This whole alter ego thing started when we wrote the song "Best of My Generation." It didn't sound like us, so we created characters to deliver the song in a video."

"We released "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go vs. Love TKO," which was Teddy Pendergrass meets Wham! At the video release party, we created an entire fictional "Boogie Nights" porn star family called "The Dirklers."

"Clit and Toris, Your Favorite Elites" have taken over our blue screen production studio for their upcoming "The E-Late Show." It will debut soon on Sunday nights at 9 pm PST. It'll be a "Johnny Carson meets Dame Edna" style featuring Vegas personalities getting berated."

Victor: "We have a bunch of other characters that we don't divulge. It would be really embarrassing if those were ever leaked. With every song we write, new characters pop out. We started using the names "Clit and Toris" about 15 years ago, but we never knew what they looked like until we put on those Andy Warhol wigs."

Alicia: "My voice acting career has had a lot to do with the different voices I use in songs. Our production show "Fatale Originale," coming to the Strip soon, will bring all those characters out of the closet and onstage for a curious cheese fondue soufflé."

CHIC COMPASS: It's been a decade since FOJC first performed



Above: Victor James and Alicia Perrone as Clit and Toris

together. In the past few years, you've had a surge in popularity, largely thanks to the inclusion of "Va Va Voom to the Moon" in the Netflix series "Emily in Paris." How do uniquely fringe artists deal with mainstream recognition?

Alicia: "We swallow it whole, with open arms. I love mainstream support, and we've had a lot of it from the very beginning. But I don't want to have to do anything "mainstream" to get it. We've tended to experiment more with genre, comedy, alter egos, to instinctively do things that take us down a long and winding road of eccentricities."

Victor: "We were Grammy-balloted right out of the gate in our first year. The official DJs on the committee told us to hurry up and become Grammy voting members so we could accept what they were nominating us for."

Alicia: "I think because we've taken the road less traveled, we've popped up more and more in mainstream spaces. Unconventional outlets that have embraced us as a wild child have also become more and more mainstream in recent years, and we've come along for the ride."

Victor: "We've had two hundred fifty-plus syncs, including one of the biggest...getting "Hot Sahara" in "The L Word," which started it all. But yeah, we were definitely very different than what mainstream was typically. When AWAL/Sony heard "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go vs. Love TKO" in 2018, that unique mash-up got us signed with them."

"Lately, we have been more experimental, taking more risks and chances outside commercial pop realms. Currently, we're pursuing global, international radio for the

first time. "Wax Ecstatic" from our "Modern Inferno" album is charting internationally and just rose to #13 on the DRT Global Rock Charts. And our unusual antics on live streams recently got us a deal with Fame Talent Agency."

Alicia: "Our version of "The Grinch" saw some virality on TikTok this past December. We just started to write a holiday album. Not just Christmas songs, but Halloween, Valentine's, etc., because we thought that would be a fresh avenue not usually taken by a band like us. Okay, now I'm just fishtailing and have lost the point of the question."

For information on upcoming performances, new releases, and video content, visit FANS OF IIM-MY CENTURY online:

FANSOFJIMMYCENTURY.COM



# 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?

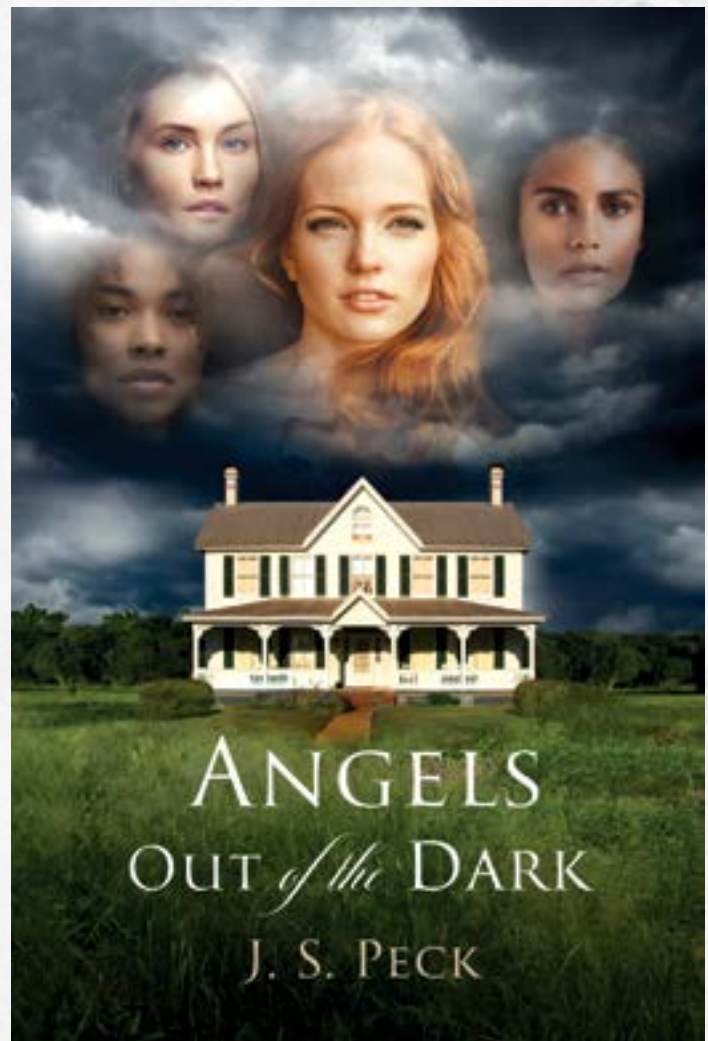
This is an empowering story for every woman who has come to a fork in the road of her life where even a simple choice becomes crucial. You will see yourself in all the angels and rejoice in knowing you are one of them.

---

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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# LIQUID STAR PHOTOGRAPHY

DESIGNER: ANNA GUPTA  
MODEL: ANNA GUPTA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: JAIME LIM





# FASHION'S NEW APPROACH

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Article by David Tupaz  
Photography by Jaime Lim, Liquid Star Photography

Evening wear and special event dressing like those we see on the Red Carpet have always been a “must-see, no-miss moment;” everyone looks forward to who is wearing what and by whom...

Fashion is indeed fun. Trends and styles convince the audience to be their own fashion critics. Some love the eccentric style, the avant-garde... others appreciate the classic traditional styles that are timeless and elegant.

Designer, Anna Gupta presents a different approach to her new collection. Using interesting fabrication with texture and detail, her evening wear looks are a cross-over classic with a twist. Her ideas give a fresh innovation to construction and technique.

In these few pages, we can see her modeling her own modern expression of High Fashion as photographed by Jaime Lim...



LIQUID  
STAR  
PHOTOGRAPHY

DESIGNER: ANNA GUPTA  
MODEL: ANNA GUPTA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: JAIME LIM



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DESIGNER: ANNA GUPTA  
MODELS: ANNA GUPTA, @NICOLEGRVES  
PHOTOGRAPHY: JAIME LIM





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STAR  
PHOTOGRAPHY

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MODEL: ANNA GUPTA  
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PHOTO BY VIRGINIA TRUDEAU FEATURING ARTISTS OF NEVADA BALLET THEATRE

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# BUSINESS SURVIVAL 2023

By Joseph Amato

2023 is a testament to an evolving business landscape shaped by unprecedented changes and challenges caused by hyperinflation, rising interest rates, politics, fear of a recession, and an ongoing Covid hangover affecting all areas of the business community. There are too many distractions and obstacles causing concern and panic among the working class and small business owners everywhere. Although we have had many technological breakthroughs in many areas of business, the economic uncertainties, the higher cost of doing business, and drastic shifts in consumer behavior, are causing businesses today to believe the worst is yet to come. Business organizations need to adapt and innovate continuously to survive and possibly thrive in this dynamic environment.

First and foremost, every business owner must do all they can to conserve cash and eliminate unnecessary or redundant operational expenses to maintain fiscal control as future economic conditions worsen before they get better. Access to capital will remain a significant part of any business's survival. Be sure that you main-



tain a close relationship with your banker, especially that they know your financial situation. You want to ensure that your bank will respond in earnest if there is a cash need over and above the company's normal cash flow. I will share with you that the business and commercial credit window is tightening already with rising interest rates. The larger banks are already tightening credit opportunities and not accepting many new loan applications as a reg-

ular course of business. The regional and community banks are also slowing the pace of lending as rates increase and their client company's cash flow does not support any new debt. National non-bank lenders are also taking a longer and more intense look at credit offerings for new applications. It's not a pretty picture, and there will need to be several positive economic factors that must take effect before the current trend reverses.

The remainder of this article will focus on other business survival tools and methods that you must take very seriously to ensure you can withstand the business unknowns and pitfalls we will face in the next 12 to 24 months.

In the ever-evolving digital arena, technology has become integral to almost every business operation, whether part of your marketing efforts, sales, or regulatory oversight. Digital tools such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and cloud computing have become integral in driving operational efficiency and customer-centric services. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this trend as companies moved to online services to continue their operations. It became apparent that digital transformation was no longer just an option but a necessity for survival. In 2023, businesses must continue to leverage technology to improve their operations, customer experience, and competitive standing.

Commercial real estate utilization has been thrown for a loop affecting CRE Investors and businesses alike as the traditional office-based work model has been completely disrupted since COVID, giving way to more flexible occupancy models, including remote and hybrid work arrangements affecting CRE occupancy rates throughout the country. These changes were initiated by the pandemic but have since been embraced as the new standard due to the supposed benefits that working remotely offers both employees and employers.

Businesses in 2023 need to adopt flexible work models to attract employees who refuse to return to the traditional work environment (if they want to return to work at all) and retain talent, promote work-life balance, reduce operational costs, and ensure business continuity during a crisis. The fact that employees are refusing the older way of working in an office environment on a full-time basis proves that the work environment of the past may never return.

Increasingly, larger businesses are expected to impact society and the environment positively. This shift is driven by rising consumer consciousness about sustainability and corporations' role in addressing social and environmental challenges. While some companies believe that prioritizing sustainability and social responsibility is more likely to attract socially/environmentally conscious customers, investors, and talent, other companies cannot afford the excess costs associated with these altruistic efforts, especially during an economic crisis.

Economic uncertainties, supply chains, and other global disruptions underscore the importance of business flexibility. One way to build flexibility is through diversification, whether in terms of products, services, markets, or developing other associated revenue streams. Diversification can help businesses manage risks and take advantage of new business opportunities, ensuring their survival in a volatile business environment. The fast-paced nature of today's business environment requires



companies to constantly learn, grow and innovate. This extends beyond product and service innovation to include processes, business models, and workplace practices.

A culture that emphasizes continuous learning and innovation can help businesses stay ahead of the curve, adapt to changes, and drive growth. In an increasingly competitive market, customer experience has become a business's key differentiator. Companies need to understand and anticipate customer needs and deliver personalized, seamless experiences across various touchpoints. Prioritizing the overall customer experience can lead to higher customer loyalty, improved





reputation, and increased profitability.

As the business world continues to change rapidly, businesses must stay on their toes, ready to adapt and innovate. Surviving in the business landscape of 2023 requires agility, resilience, and a forward-thinking mindset. Whether leveraging digital technology, fostering sustainability, implementing flexible work models, diversifying operations, cultivating a learning culture, or prioritizing customer experience, the strategies for business survival are diverse yet interconnected. Ultimately, the key to survival lies in business owners' ability to align these strategies with their business's unique

goals, capabilities, and evolving demands.

Truth be told, I must disclose that for the first time in my writing career, I used artificial intelligence ("AI") as research for approximately 50% of this article. In my past writings, I would use my extensive business background, experience, and twenty-five-plus years of business knowledge to write business-related articles for various publications. My additional research was almost always accomplished through Google, IXQuick, and other metasearch engines to provide additional context in writing my articles. Now with the emergence of "AI," I can cut that research time to less

than half the usual time it takes for me to write an article and still make the information my own.

When providing information to the general public, I now believe that "AI" can be a valid addition to the content provided. But I also think it can be a very slippery slope if used to offset more intense research or in an academic setting when plagiarizing the content of an "AI" search could be considered cheating if not fully disclosed as a source or reference material.

I will leave this entire "AI" subject for a later article, so there will be more to come.



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# CINEMA CON HONORS MARTIN SCORSESE, CHRISTOPHER NOLAN, ZENDAYA, 'JOY RIDE' CAST AMONG OTHERS

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

CinemaCon, which is the largest and most important gathering of the worldwide motion picture theater industry, recently handed out awards to the best and brightest in the entertainment industry.

The official convention of The National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO), it is held annually in Las Vegas since 2011.

The global event, which attracts attendees from more than 80 countries, was held at the Caesar's Palace. It shows summer films, does presentations and feature premieres.

This year, the honorees include Martin Scorsese (Legend of Cinema), Christopher Nolan and wife-producer Emma Thomas (Spirit of the Industry), Zendaya (Star of the Year), Melissa McCarthy (Cinema Verite), Illumination founder and CEO Christopher Meledandri (Excellence in Animation), actors Anthony Ramos and



Dominique Fishback (Rising Stars of the Year).

The 80-year-old iconic Scorsese, who promoted his latest movie "Killers of the Flower Moon,"

*Above: Photo of Martin Scorsese by Armando Gallo for HFPA.*



*Above: Emma Thomas and Christopher Nolan received the NATO Spirit of the Industry Award at the CinemaCon 2023 Big Screen Achievement Awards. Photo by Earl Gibson III.*

was honored with the inaugural CinemaCon Legend of Cinema Award, which in the future will be handed out annually and named after Scorsese.

He said of his film, “This is my sixth film with Leonardo DiCaprio, tenth with Robert DeNiro and first time with them together.”

The crime drama, in association with Apple Original Films, will have its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival next month.

Nolan, who accepted the Spirit of the Industry award with his

wife Thomas at the Big Screen Achievement Awards closing night at The Colosseum of Caesar’s Palace, said, “Those of us who’ve been called upon, sort of outrageously, to defend it (cinema) over the last few years are often accused, I’m often accused of magical thinking, of nostalgia, of daydreaming as opposed to a sound business plan and it’s taken the last few years for us all to realize that when you’re talking about movies, magical thinking, nostalgia, daydreaming – that is the sound business plan. It’s the only sound business plan. That’s what movies are.”

Nolan, who presented footage of his upcoming historical drama *Oppenheimer* to the CinemaCon crowd earlier in the week, recalled how a young man approached him while walking by a Regal cinema in New York and said, “You make the world a better place,” and walked on.

The British American filmmaker, whose films have grossed \$5 billion worldwide, continued, “The first thing I thought is, my agents never said anything that nice to me. I started to reflect on all of us who work in the movies — from the studios, distributors, theater owners, marketers and the people serving popcorn — we’re all engaged in a process that, in some small way, does make the world a better place.

“It’s an absolute good because we all work in what is the greatest art form ever created. It can combine the subjective experience of another human being the way a novel can but it can combine at the same time with the empathetic experience of being in a theater, of feeling what the rest of the audience is feeling, and so I thought, what a wonderful sentiment.”

Then the four-time Golden Globe nominee confessed, “If I’m being completely honest, what the young man actually said was, ‘You make the world a better place, Mr. (Aaron) Sorkin.’” The audience roared with laughter at Nolan’s admission that he was mistaken for screenwriter and director Sorkin.

The 52-year-old filmmaker behind

such movies as *The Dark Knight*, *Inception*, *Dunkirk* and *Memento* added, "I think the sentiment still stands. It stands not just for the great Aaron Sorkin but for all of us who work in movies because what movies provide is entertainment, it's enjoyment, it's emotion, it's catharsis, it's fear, it's everything. It's a wonderful thing to be involved in. We're all incredibly privileged to be a part of it."

Nolan also said, "Whatever dreamlike stories are allowed to come out of this medium stands on the foundation of your theaters. And so, for that reason, it's a privilege to work for you. Thank you very much."

Thomas, who produced *The Dark Knight Trilogy*, *The Prestige*, *Inception*, *Interstellar*, *Dunkirk* and *Tenet*, told the CinemaCon audience about *Oppenheimer*, her latest collaboration with Nolan: "We're at the part in our filmmaking process where the creative work is done and we have to put our baby out into the real world and it is a terrifying, terrifying process."

Thomas revealed that it is about this time that she and her husband Nolan look at each other and ask the question, "Why do we do this?"

She added, "When we're standing at the back of one of your theaters watching one of the first paid audiences watch our movie... There's something about watching an audience who bothered to come out of their house, sit within those four walls of the theater and be transported by the stories that

we get to tell that make sense of everything that we do.

"Thank you for this huge honor and for allowing us to do what we do."

Hosted by Entertainment Tonight's Kevin Frazier, the closing ceremo-

ny also feted singer-actress Zendaya, 2023 Golden Globe Best Television Actress – Drama Series ("Euphoria").

The triple threat actress said in her acceptance speech, "I love what I do so, so much and I'm so grateful for all of you because without all



*Above: Zendaya at the CinemaCon 2023 Big Screen Achievement Awards at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada on Thursday, April 27, 2023. Photo by Earl Gibson III*

of you, what I do wouldn't have a home or a place to go."

The star of *Dune*, *The Greatest Showman* and three *Spider-Man* movies recounted that she went to see *Spider-Man* in 3D on her first date at age 15: "I think in the theater, that's where someone can feel seen, that's where someone can feel less alone, that's where someone can escape, that's where someone can build a new dream."

The 26-year-old actress earlier presented a trailer of the highly anticipated sequel *Dune: Part 2* with co-star Timothée Chalamet and director Denis Villeneuve.

Christopher Meledandri, whose Illumination animation studio created the hits *Despicable Me*, *The Secret Life of Pets*, *Sing* and the current box office sensation *The Super Mario Bros. Movie*, recalled how his parents – a men's fashion designer (father) and an activist (mother) – did not care at all about animation.

The 63-year-old New York native narrated how his dad brought him to watch the Dennis Hopper-helmed road drama classic, *Easy Rider*, which starred Peter Fonda, Jack Nicholson and Hopper himself, when Meledandri was just 10 years old.

Meledandri shared that in his early 30s, as a parent, he discovered Disney animated movies and was blown away. "My career would be changed forever," he said.

The Illumination CEO disclosed

that on opening weekend, he would sneak into three different cinemas to watch audiences watching his movies: "In the second theater, I was standing there and I was watching the audience comprised of grandparents, children, couples, people dressed up just having an incredible time.

"It dawned on me that at that moment there were 25,000 theaters across the globe that were playing our film and that there was a level of joy that we were providing for those audiences at a moment in time when the world needs joy so badly."

He added, "I feel so fortunate to be partnered with all of you in that endeavor. So, thank you for being our partners, and as you've heard so many times this week, we wouldn't be here without all of you. This whole art form is not going to slip through our fingers because everybody here is determined to make it as great as it's ever been."

In her acceptance speech, Melissa McCarthy recalled how, at 17 years old, she watched *Star Wars* for the first time and said to herself, "Maybe I can do that. And I thought of the possibilities of what I could become."



*Above: Chris Meledandri at the CinemaCon 2023 Big Screen Achievement Awards at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada on Thursday, April 27, 2023  
Photo by Earl Gibson III.*



*Left: Melissa McCarthy holds the Cinéma Vérité Award at the CinemaCon 2023 Big Screen Achievement Awards at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada on Thursday, April 27, 2023. Photo by Earl Gibson III.*

McCarthy also recalled how on June 15, 1978, when she was just eight years old, she watched *Grease* and went on to see it several times more. She quipped, “It broke my brain and I did not even question why 30-year-olds were still in high school.”

The actress realized her dream, starring in such films as *Brides-*

*maids*, *The Heat*, *Tammy*, *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* and *Spy*. Disney earlier presented footage of the live-action movie version of *The Little Mermaid*, where she portrays the villainess Ursula.

The two-time Golden Globe nominee said, “It feels a little odd to be thanked by the very institution that encouraged me towards the path

of my life’s work. Movies were my inspiration, my educators and my friends. They not only opened my eyes to the possibilities for what I could become and that feeling of sitting in a theater experiencing the collective joy and fear and love changed not only how I saw the world but how I saw myself in it.

“It made me realize at an early age that we are all in this together and need that more now than ever. We have drifted from our shared humanity, but I truly believe that cinema and storytelling can help heal that divide.”

The talented *Joy Ride* cast – Ashley Park, Sherry Cola, Stephanie Hsu and Sabrina Wu – showed up to receive their Big Screen Achievement Award.

Park said, “We had a great time, had fun making memories. None of us ever really thought we had a place in this capacity on a big screen and the fact that you wanted this on your screens means so much to us.” On behalf of the cast, she also thanked Adele Lim, who made her feature directing debut in *Joy Ride*, producer Seth Rogen and writers Teresa Hsiao and Cherry Chevapravatdumrong.

Dominique Fishback, who won the Rising Star of the Year Award



*Above: The cast of Joy Ride, Ashley Park, Sherry Cola, Stephanie Hsu and Sabrina Wu. Photo by Earl Gibson III.*

with her *Transformers: Rise of the Beasts* co-star, Anthony Ramos, recalled how she used to work at a Regal movie theater and dreamed of becoming part of the movies.

*Below: Anthony Ramos and Dominique Fishback at the CinemaCon 2023 Big Screen Achievement Awards at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada on Thursday, April 27, 2023. Photo by Earl Gibson III.*

The 32-year-old New Yorker, who has appeared in such movies as *Show Me a Hero*, *The Deuce* and *Judas and the Black Messiah*, said she is very grateful for the recognition.

Ramos, on the other hand, said, "Thank you for recognizing this Puerto Rican kid from Brooklyn."

The 31-year-old actor first caught attention when he originated the dual roles of John Laurens and Philip *Hamilton* in the Broadway musical *Hamilton*. He also appeared in the movies *In the Heights* and *A Star Is Born*.

Rolando B. Rodriguez, NATO chairman, received the Marquee Award.





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# ABOUT TOWN



**Joiful Jazz Wednesday at Notoriety in Las Vegas**  
(Photography by Kendall Hardin)  
**Above:** Clint Holmes

**Jennifer Main Art Exhibition at Art Encounter**  
**Left:** Jason Steiner & Jennifer Main  
**Below:** Jennifer Main





**Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation of Nevada  
Inaugural Glamp Out Benefitting Camp Firefly** (Photography  
courtesy of Candlelighters)

**Above:** (L to R) Clayton Dore, Paula Lawrence, and Steve  
LaMonica

**Right:** (L to R) AJ Cole, Erica Lanter, Daniel Carlson



**Dress for Success Showcase at Four Seasons Las Vegas**

**Above:** Transformation Sponsor Aristocrat Gaming (Photo by  
Eugene Dela Cruz)

**Right:** (L to R) Kristin Koca, Sand's Executive Director, Corporate  
Communications, and Ron Reese, Senior Vice President of Global  
Communications and Corporate Affairs with Dress for Success  
Southern Nevada Executive Director Norma Intriago immediately  
following the announcement of Sand Care's generous contribution  
of \$100,000 to support career development services for women.



**Left:** Executive Director Norma Intriago  
pictured on the Runway to Success Red  
Carpet with Bank of America (Photo by  
Casey Jade)

**Liberace Birthday Celebration at Alexis Park** (Photography courtesy of Niki Sands)

**Right:** (L to R) Ann Parenti, Stacey Gualandi, Niki Sands, Samuel Novak



**Award-Winning UNLV Division of Jazz & Commercial Music**

(Photography courtesy of UNLV)

**Below:** The UNLV Division of Jazz & Commercial Music received five prestigious awards that will be publicized in *DownBeat* magazine's June issue.



**Wine Women & Shoes Benefit for St. Jude's Ranch for Children**

(Photography by David Senecal)

**Far Left:** Stacey Gualandi  
**Left:** Stacey Gualandi with municipal and U.S. Air Force Firemen in attendance at the event.

**Forgotten Song Foundation's Annual VIVA Awards, and Chic Compass Magazine Launch** (Photography courtesy of Cashman Photo)  
**Below:** (L to R) Marlene Ricci, Kelly Clinton, Earl Turner, Clint Holmes, Dave Loeb  
**Right:** Dane Gilliland and Claire Nagel



**Below:** (L to R) Dave Loeb and Uli Geissendoerfer on the piano, (Standing L to R) Dave Richardson, Paul Lowden, Cocho Arbe



**Above:** (L to R) Roxy Jones and Nate Jones



**Below:** (Standing) Joan Peck (Seated L to R) Marteen Moore, Sondra Lynch, Patricia Alcadle, Susan Houston, Nancy Barrett



**Above:** (L to R) Elaine Harris, Scott Harris, Stacey Gualandi

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