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C O M P A S S

VOLUME 6 | EDITION 2



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RICH**

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TOPPING
AND NOT
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Joan S. Peck
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From the Editor

Chic Compass is Celebrating Milestones in this latest edition with stories that reflect momentous happenings, breakthroughs, or occasions that often provide the impetus to move forward. They offer a thoughtful re-examination for ourselves as we honor and appreciate the journey or transformation of others.

As you read our articles, you will be reminded how fortunate you are to live in this vibrant community that provides so much. *Chic Compass* is filled with stories about music, art, fashion, philanthropic opportunities, travel, educational information, and people giving back to society.

Allan Rich, one of the most prolific music lyricists, graces our cover. His story is uplifting and delightful, making us grateful for all he and his partner, Jud Friedman, have contributed to the music world. Not to be forgotten is the Beatles LOVE Cirque success story in a once-in-a-lifetime gathering. Midnight Muse celebrates its 10th anniversary and exemplifies how one accomplishment can expand to more. Dancing is a different form of music, and learning how to do it to your best takes a special teacher like Ray Guzman.

Where better to showcase where many stars performed in Vegas and highlight the 55th anniversary on July 2 of the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino, one of Las Vegas's most iconic resorts. Durango Casino & Resort, the newest property of Station Casinos located at Durango and 215, is an exquisite property that is taking the ever-expanding Southwest part of the city by storm.

Or perhaps give the nod to The Golden Steer and

all its history, where you can sense and see the photos of the stars of the past who enjoyed a good steak and times of performing for fun. Who doesn't enjoy an outstanding wine with an appetizer? Wineaux is the place to go. Are you thinking about opening a restaurant? A suggestion? Read the business article before you decide.

Once again, David Tupaz provides beautiful fashions that will make you marvel at their exquisite beauty from the fashion shows in New York City and Los Angeles, photographed by Mark Gunther and Jaime Lim. We also can glimpse the night's styles with insider news about the Oscars.

We always honor those who give so much back to our community and the world. Ryan Dusick's (the original drummer of Maroon 5), story is tender, demonstrating how, in time, we find our true purpose. Dana Boldizar heads Women United, the heart and soul of women giving back to the community in many ways. Jeremi-

ah Program is lauded as one of the most successful models for disrupting the cycle of generational poverty and is finally here in Las Vegas. Don't miss reading it.

And we can't forget our animals – Street Dogz. The article is dedicated to Sarah St. Claire, cousin of the publisher Ann Parenti. The non-profit initially provided food to dogs in need, especially homeless ones, a cause dear to Sarah's heart. They have expanded their services to include those for cats and people, partnering with others to impact our community substantially in many ways.

Read about the Señoras of Excellence Señores of Distinction Awards Gala, which benefits Latino students pursuing higher education and has generated over 5,000 scholarships for high school students in Nevada.

A fascinating place to visit is the newly-opened Ice Age Fossils State Park, just 20 minutes north of the Las Vegas Strip. Although construction started in 2018, the

315-acre state park opened this past January. It offers a look into the prehistoric past to learn about the ancient animals that once inhabited the region during the Ice Age.

Or, you might want to take a walk into the past with a visit to The Jungle Palace, formerly owned by Siegfried & Roy, who were top entertainers in Las Vegas for many years. The house and its property are beautiful and filled with many of the duo's gorgeous collections.

As you read each piece in this issue, I believe you will realize, as I do, how very fortunate we are to live in a world filled with so many inspiring people, events, and opportunities.

We can't wait for you to see what we have waiting for you in this current edition. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did to create it for you.

Joan S. Peck



OUR MISSION

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

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THE NEW SOUTHWEST: Unveiling Durango Casino & Resort

By Brian G Thornton



Vibrant

Well, at least that was my initial takeaway. My inaugural visit to the Southwest Vegas Valley's newest luxury resort off the Strip gaming destination. Welcome to Durango Casino & Resort. Nestled in the vibrant landscape of Southwest Las Vegas, Durango Casino & Resort stands as a testament to perseverance and innovation.

Between the natural light flowing into the \$780 million resort, the inside-out concept of some of the property's restaurants, the light color scheme, and plenty of open space, there's no question this is a modern resort. Standing tall just across the I-215 beltway from IKEA, it has emerged from nearly two decades of dormancy; this architectural marvel opened its doors in 2023 to resounding acclaim. As a seasoned writer in the art, architecture, and design arenas, I embarked on a journey to uncover the storied history, exquisite design, and profound impact of Durango Casino & Resort. I invite you to delve into the heart of this gem of the new Southwest.

Historic Journey

Station Casinos, a Red Rock Resorts, Inc. subsidiary, purchased the property from developer Jim Rhodes in 2000 with plans for a 1000-room resort. On December 5, 2023, Chairman and CEO of

Durango Casino & Resort as seen from the Durango Drive Entry. Photo by Rodrigo Hernandez/boogie 702.

Red Rock Resorts Frank J. Fertitta and Vice Chairman of Red Rock Resorts Lorenzo J. Fertitta commemorated the grand opening with a traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony. That may be one of the few 'traditional' elements one might attribute to the resort.

Situating Durango Casino & Resort opening amidst the backdrop of a tumultuous economic landscape, where recessions and the pandemic cast shadows of uncertainty, amplifies the significance of its completion. Despite the challenges, Durango Casino & Resort emerged as a beacon of hope and revitalization, transforming the dormant 71 acres into a vi-

brant hub of desert entertainment and hospitality. A second phase is planned for a 500-room hotel tower, spa, movie theater, bowling alley, music venue, additional convention space, and gaming space. According to Joseph Greff of JP Morgan, groundbreaking to expand Durango Casino & Resort will occur before the end of 2024.

Contemporary Desert Southwest Design

The Friedmutter Group got it right again. The Friedmutter Group has worked successfully on other Station properties, such as Green Valley Ranch and Red Rock Casino. Durango Casino & Resort is upscale and modern and has a

distinctive desert vibe. The 15-story tower is a new landmark seen for miles driving the beltway. Its east elevation is animated by the four standalone restaurants and the associated outdoor dining patios.

With architectural and meticulous attention to detail, Durango Casino & Resort embodies the essence of contemporary desert southwest design, seamlessly blending modern aesthetics with regional influences. From the intricate lines of its facade to the carefully curated interiors, every aspect of Durango Casino & Resort exudes a sense of sophistication and cultural resonance.

Colorways inspired by the hues of the desert were incorporated

Durango Casino & Resort Lobby. Artwork by Teresita. Photo by Clint Jenkins.





Centennial resident and local designer Sonya L. Coleman commented: "Durango Casino & Resort delivered a remarkable experience that impressed me...It was certainly worth the journey. From delicious food to atmosphere and client care - everything contributed to making my visit memorable, ensuring I'll be back soon." Photo by Clint Jenkins.

along the stylized agave plant, a common motif in the Southwestern style. Stacked and textured concrete has become popular for exterior and privacy walls. A recurring grid trellis grid appears in the curtain wall with copper reflective glass and several canopies and vertical screens. The casino's flooring also incorporates natural materials, from light-toned terrazzo, porcelain ceramic, and broken tile to travertine. Durango employed a neutral background

for a clean and organized appearance. Adding to the neutral backdrop are several scaled texture walls on the interior that appear as a horizontal stripe and large stone panels throughout the public space. One unexpected favorite is the gilt concave apses in the Bel-Aire Lounge.

Architectural Visionaries and Design Maestros

Upon arrival, guests are immediately greeted by natural stone-clad floors and walls while the texture, light, and neutral tones flood the space. Durango's inviting hotel lobby has relaxed energy and a breeze, and its thoughtful design and warm light greet guests at the open doors. The

stunning space flows into the lobby bar, where cozy nooks, cool sofas, and one-of-a-kind art pieces create the perfect chemistry of conversations, relaxation, and a sense of place. Bel-Aire Lounge serves as the lobby bar. It's a private oasis tucked away from the hotel's main entrance, located at the west end of the building, a sophisticated space with a long linear fireplace and myriad seating groups encircling the center bar. Its surprise offerings include clever oversized flat TV monitors that glide elegantly into the ceiling when not featuring event and sports content. A central DJ booth furthers the nighttime vibe when the lobby needs some stirring and adds even more bounce to the destination bar. Bel-Aire



Lounge takes inspiration from travels worldwide and the beautiful palette of the desert landscape.

Looney & Associates was the interior designer along with Avenue Interior Design for the Bel-Aire Lounge and Backyard. Keeping cool is key when you live in the desert. Visitors will absorb the luxurious feel and ambiance of the calm color palettes. The southwestern desert style allows for fun pops of color throughout the space.

Gaming Floor Amenities and Experiences

Spanning an impressive expanse,



the gaming floor of Durango Casino & Resort delivers unparalleled excitement and exhilaration for enthusiasts. The elegantly designed casino floor is spacious and bright, filled with natural light

Above Top: Frank Fertitta III quipped: "Go do demographics around every local casino site in Las Vegas, and you'll see that Durango is an absolute no-brainer." Photo by Clint Jenkins.

Above: Durango's light and airy casino floor. Photo by Clint Jenkins.



and unique elements merging to create a visually appealing and welcoming gaming environment, including wide stone walkways and high ceilings. A vibrant, floral, agave-inspired carpet design with flourishes of color that visually pulls the patrons through the casino is a welcome surprise. It is simply arranged as a large rectangle with natural light north and south connecting the gaming floor with its surrounding landscape. Within the 83,000 square feet of casino space, it offers 2,300 of the newest slots and 60-plus table games, alongside individual high limit slots and table games rooms for high stakes bettors. Proving the new Southwest offers locals the

same experience off the Strip, Durango Casino & Resort's bespoke STN Sportsbook is a 10,000-square-foot space featuring a sizeable 205-seat sportsbook and the 24-hour vibe of the co-located The George Sportsmen's Lounge.

Culinary Delights

A contemporary gaming resort must include a range or variety of dining and drink options to offer a little or a lot of something for everyone. In addition to the food court Eat Your Heart Out with its 11 restaurants, there are stand-alone restaurants to discover, too. From the upscale ambiance of Nicco's Prime Cuts & Fresh Fish to

The George Sportsmen's Lounge enjoys an outdoor experience equal to the interior. Photo by Clint Jenkins.

the cozy charm of Mijo Modern Mexican to the California-inspired Summer House and its decadent bakery, all offer unique dining experiences. The architecture of each venue is expressed along the Durango Drive elevation of the building. Each features lush outdoor dining experiences seen from the adjacent parking field. Durango Casino & Resort tantalizes taste buds with a diverse array of culinary offerings.

You won't easily stumble upon Wax Rabbit, the clandestine speakeasy and tequila bar. It is a



Bel-Aire Backyard features private cabanas and a 7,200-square-foot pool with a central fountain. Photo by Clint Jenkins.

hidden gem that adds an element of mystery and allure. Clue: find the secluded entry inside the Mijo Restaurant.

The George Sportsmen's Lounge is a brilliant indoor-outdoor 24-hour dining and entertainment lounge. New trivia is that its name came from classic Vegas big tipplers, commonly called "a George" – a

nod to the recognizable portrait on the one-dollar bill.

Eat Your Heart Out is described as a "next-generation food hall" with eclectic cuisines and a focus on communal dining experience. Spanning 25,000 square feet, the eatery is home to enticing culinary offerings from local favorites, including Shang Artisan Noodle, Vesta Coffee, Nielsen's Frozen Custard, Yu-Or-Mi Sushi, Oyster Bar, and DRNK bar. The addition of exciting offerings is

new-to-market concepts, including Los Angeles staple Irv's Burgers, New York's Prince Street Pizza, Philadelphia's Fiorella by Marc Vetri, and the Hawaii-centric Ai Pono Café.

Outdoor Oasis

Lifescapes International, Inc., a renowned design firm out of Newport Beach, understands gardens and landscapes. No matter where you enter the property, there is a welcome desert-inspired

island of trees or cleverly textured softscape to greet you. As seen from afar on the north face of the building, the Durango logo is the agave plant – a nod to the desert landscapes in which the resort sits. The new brand’s color pallet is imbued with warm colors and styled to fit the landscape. Durango Casino & Resort’s outdoor spaces, crafted by Lifescapes International, Inc. serve as a casual escape for leisure and relaxation, weaving in the surrounding desert grounds.

According to ILL, “The distinct entries reflect the character of the surrounding neighborhood and increase in size and magnificence as you approach the property. With its more intimate design,

the main entrance highlights the grandeur of date palms, signature Palo Verde trees, Washingtonia palms, southern live oaks, fan palms, Holly oak, and cork oak. Another unique outdoor amenity is the adjacent event lawn, ample enough to host large-scale events, with space for a stage for live performances.”

Impacting the Community

Beyond its architectural splendor, Durango Casino & Resort stands as a catalyst for economic growth, generating countless construction jobs and permanent employment opportunities for the local community. David Horn, vice president and general manager of Durango

Casino & Resort, says, “We are eager to extend this warm hospitality to the Las Vegas community, recognizing the vibrant and diverse tapestry that makes this city truly unique. Our aim is to be more than just a place to stay or play; we want to be an integral part of the community, where residents and visitors alike can find a sense of comfort, enjoyment, and entertainment.”

It’s expected that the management will frame the goal of the Station’s hospitality to reach and embrace the community. It’s quickly become a favorite for visiting locals.

Bel-Aire Lounge is an oasis just off the lobby. Photo by Clint Jenkins.





One of the 200 guest rooms and suites with a commanding view of the nearby mountains. Photo by Clint Jenkins.

The New Southwest

Durango Casino & Resort is a gift to locals. This is the opposite for those who only make it to The Strip to play host to visiting family and friends, navigate the traffic, and pay to park. Durango is well positioned in the Southwest valley off the beltway with plenty of free parking. That is an advantage for locals and tourists.

Sunsets over the vast expanse of Southwest Las Vegas now include Durango Casino & Resort: a testament to human ingenuity and resilience. From its storied histo-

ry to its contemporary allure, this oasis in the desert represents the epitome of the new Southwest—a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation. Sometimes, you can't be all things to all people, yet this works. As they grow further into their comfort zone, locals like me will adjust their visits to get the desired vibe out of this resort. Durango is a welcomed new neighbor. With each visit, guests are invited

to immerse themselves in a world where luxury meets authenticity, and every corner tells a tale of perseverance and possibility. Durango Casino & Resort: where the spirit of the new Southwest finds its home.

Station Casinos and Lifescapes International, Inc. contributed to the content of this article.

"Our aim is to be more than just a place to stay or play; we want to be an integral part of the community, where residents and visitors alike can find a sense of comfort, enjoyment, and entertainment."

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ALLAN RICH: CHART-TOPPING AND NOT STOPPING

By Stacey Gualandi



“*B*esides watching Whitney Houston record *Run to You*, this is one of the greatest nights of our lives.”

With tears in his eyes, Allan Dennis Rich thanked the cheering crowd on behalf of himself and lifelong co-songwriter Jud J. Friedman.

“Our lives are flashing in front of us,” Rich says.

Both were the special guests at The Composers Showcase inside Myron’s at the Smith Center in downtown Las Vegas, where a powerhouse lineup of singers performed their greatest hits.

“I hope we can get through this song because both of us have been crying,” Friedman says before the duo performed their Dave Koz single *That’s the Way I Feel About You*.

At Left: Photo of Allan Rich standing beside Jud J. Friedman at The Composers Showcase by Jonathan Scott.

Far Left: Photo of Allan Rich with his dog Charlie by Jaime Lim (Liquid Star Photography)

As prolific as this pair is when it comes to writing songs, they couldn't have composed a better tribute to their phenomenal body of work.

"It's an out-of-body experience, but we're humbled and grateful," Rich says.

The name Allan Dennis Rich might not ring a bell, but this songwriter's colossal catalog of cuts will.

Rich is the two-time Oscar, Grammy, and Golden Globe-nominated songwriter behind such blockbusters as Whitney Houston's *Run to You* from *The Bodyguard* to Natalie Cole's *I Live For Your Love* to the No. 1 hit single *I Don't Have the Heart* by James Ingram.

"Everybody always thinks the artist wrote the songs," Rich jokes.

The A-list of names who have recorded his songs is endless: Barbra Streisand, Tina Turner, Rod Stewart, Luther Vandross, Dolly Parton, Barry Manilow, Ray Charles, Smokey Robinson, and Gladys Knight, just to name a few. Oh, and a little boy band named NSYNC.

"[In '97] my publisher said, 'We got a cut of *I Drive Myself Crazy* [co-written with Ellen Shipsey and Rick Nowels] with this group NSYNC,'" Rich says, "I said, 'Who are they?' Ten million records later, I found out."

At last count, Rich's songs have sold almost 70 million copies!

"On one hand, I feel like I've suc-



ceeded beyond what I thought. On the other hand, I feel like I haven't gone as far as I'm capable of," Rich says.

The curators of the Hollywood Museum would beg to differ. Now featured prominently on the second floor of the historic Hollywood and Highland building is a spectacular glass-enclosed, floor-to-ceiling literal shrine devoted to the legendary lyricist.

It's part of the museum's PRIDE exhibit and features many famous faces he's worked with, gold and platinum records, lyric sheets, photos, BMI awards, performance costumes, and more. When Rich and I met there for our interview, I quickly realized I was in the company of songwriting royalty.

Above: Allan speaks with Stacey Gualandi with many of his award-winning and chart-topping titles on display. Photo by Jaime Lim (Liquid Star Photography)

"I am blessed, and I feel very privileged and humbled. I really do," Rich says. "It's one of the greatest moments of my life to be in a museum, but I'm just sorry that my parents didn't get a chance to see it."

Growing up in Brooklyn, Rich and his siblings, twin brother Lawrence and younger sister Nadeen, were raised on music appreciation.

"Every Sunday, my dad would make us breakfast, and then he would pull out the Victrola," Rich says of dad Norman. "The first song I ever heard was *Hush Now, Don't Explain* by Billie Hol-

iday. Nothing excited him more than when he played his records for us.”

His mother, Evelyn, also spent endless hours teaching the twins song and dance routines they would perform from classroom to classroom. (Rich says their big hit was *Side By Side/Oh, We Ain't Got a Barrel of Money*.)

“There’s no guarantees, but I knew I was going to do this since I was a little kid,” Rich says of someday being a music star. “I was called the ‘weeping one’ because I always sounded like I was crying when singing.”

At 18, Rich entered a contest to find the “Best New Talent in the Catskill Mountains.” He won the title for singing a medley with a “real live band” for the very first time in front of 1,000 people. His cautious parents quickly realized that he should pursue a music career.

In 1980, he moved to Hollywood and continued to struggle as a singer-turned-songwriter by selling shoes and, you guessed it...waiting tables. He worked at the celebrity-friendly The Source Restaurant on Sunset Boulevard, where his boss often told him he would never leave.

“I told him, ‘Like, hell, I’m not! I don’t know how I’m gonna do it, but I know I am,’” Rich says.

He served famous musicians like then-unknown Michael Feinstein, who was playing in piano bars; hit songwriters like Barry Mann



Above: Allan Rich, Whitney Houston, David Foster, and Jud J. Friedman.

Below: Allan Rich with his twin brother Lawrence and sister, Nadeen.





Above: Photo of Allan Rich by Jaime Lim (Liquid Star Photography)

and Steve Tyrell; and young stars like Steve Martin, Charlie Sheen, Tom Cruise, and even Muhammad Ali. He once told a customer in Booth #2, popular singer Syreeta Wright (who was once married to Stevie Wonder), that he, too, was a songwriter.

"After I moved to California, my dad came to me when I was 31," Rich says. "He said, 'Allan, I think you gave it your best shot, but I'm worried about your future. I think

you need to think about getting a job and making a living.'"

"I was so crushed," Rich admits. "But if I had listened to my father, I would've missed my big break one year later."

That big break came in 1982 while on the Venice Beach boardwalk selling shoes—and his songwriting skills—to award-winning music producer Howie Rice.

Rice liked what he heard, and soon, the Brooklyn boy with the big dreams was co-writing songs

for such iconic performers as Barry Manilow, Patti Labelle, and Gladys Knight. But it took another seven years before he had a bonafide pop hit with Natalie Cole called *I Live For Your Love*, co-written with Pam Reswick and Steve Werfel.

Then came a full circle moment for Rich. Remember that encounter he had with Syreeta Wright years before?

"Well, Syreeta and Smokey Robinson did a duet of a song I co-wrote," Rich boasts of *Love Brought Us Here Tonight*. "I was invited to the recording session, and when I knocked on the door, Syreeta answered it. I asked, 'Do you remember where you know me from?'"

She told him he looked familiar but couldn't place the face.

"I said, 'I was your waiter at The Source restaurant, and now I'm coming to watch you record my song with Smokey Robinson.'"

Rich says Syreeta screamed, wrapped her arms around him, gave him a big hug, and then signed his lyric sheets. She wrote, "Dear Allan, Remember: music will prevail."

"It really is magic," Rich says. "[A song] comes from connecting to a higher power and just being open to hearing what the universe has to say to you. I know it sounds airy fairy, but it's not something tangible."

Rich admits he is a conventional

songwriter who likes to write conversations—with a little twist—that says something in a way you’ve never quite heard before. “In fact, if it’s not too crass, I call myself a ‘missionary position’ songwriter because I’m very traditional in the sense that I’m not a poet, and I don’t write stream of consciousness. It looks easy when you read it down the page, but making it look easy is very difficult.”

Little did Rich know that in 1989, when peermusic head Kathy Spanberger introduced him to fellow songwriter Jud J. Friedman, they would become writing partners for life and go on to make beautiful (and award-worthy) music together.

“The first song we ever wrote was number one in America,” Rich says of the James Ingram ballad *I Don’t Have the Heart*. “I think that’s the best song I’ve ever written in my life.”

The second song they wrote was the number one Adult Contemporary song *I Just Had to Hear Your Voice* by Oleta Adams in 1993.

“If that doesn’t tell you we were meant to be together...” Rich says of their over 30-year partnership. “When I’ve written a lyric, Jud would elevate it to make me look like a genius. That’s a rare thing to find in somebody, and I always say he’s my Burt Bacharach.”

Almost overnight, this talented twosome found their own voice. “There’s always a tearfulness and a tenderness in our songs,” Rich says. “Sometimes my lyrics look



Above: Allan Rich with Jud J. Friedman at the BMI Awards.

so simple on the page, but there is a magic in that simplicity, and sometimes I may need to take it up a notch, and Jud will always let me know—but always in a constructive way,”

Rich admits, “We all have to find our own process, and when I trust that process and don’t judge it, I succeed.”

In 1990, he didn’t know exactly why but trusted his instincts and turned down a European songwriting trip. Instead, he stayed home and wrote the first draft of the original lyric for Whitney Houston’s *Run to You*.

“I wrote it with Jud for Whitney, but the reality of the song is it coincided with a 10-year breakup in my own life,” Rich says. “I haven’t written many songs from

real-life experiences...but I’m happy for the pain I’ve felt because it has helped me write some great songs.”

Run To You on The Bodyguard soundtrack went on to earn Rich and Friedman their first Academy and Grammy Award nominations. Rich says that, by far, the biggest highlight of his career was being nominated and becoming a member of the Academy.

Four years later, the dynamic duo writing team received another Oscar and Grammy nod, as well as a Golden Globe nomination for their 1997 Kenny Loggins ballad *For the First Time* co-written with legendary film scorer James Newton Howard for the movie *One*



Fine Day starring Michelle Pfeiffer and George Clooney.

Rich was proud to have his family by his side at the Golden Globes and still laughs about how excited he was to wear a new burgundy velvet Nehru jacket he bought for the awards ceremony.

"I thought, 'Oh my God, I love this jacket. It looks so different and so unique, and I felt like a million bucks.'"

But it didn't take long for someone to burst his fashion bubble.

"I needed to go to the men's room, so I was walking through the tables in the ballroom, and suddenly, I saw a hand raised and a finger snapping, 'Waiter, more wine, please.'" Rich jokes,

in retrospect. "I whispered, 'I'm not your waiter; I'm a Golden Globe nominee!'"

(Rich got rid of the jacket the very next day.)

Writing a song for the one-and-only Barbra Streisand more than made up for any award show slight that same year.

Rich and his co-writers Dorothy Sea Gazeley and Marsha Malamet waited five years for Streisand to record the song *Lessons to Be Learned*.

"It's one of my most beautiful songs we've ever written," Rich says. "My favorite line in the song does tear me up because I wish I could live the line:

*No matter how many times
you stumble or fall
The greatest lesson is loving
yourself through it all.*

"That was a holy grail moment, and ever since, I've been trying to get a second song recorded by Barbra. It still hasn't happened yet." (He got to introduce his Jewish mother to Ms. Streisand at the Academy Awards, which he calls another career highlight.)

With so many writing credits and numerous chart-topping hits, Rich hopes his songs' messages have helped move and touch people.

"If someone could hold onto that [message] and maybe not feel so bad, then I've done my job."

Make no mistake. This chart-top-

ping writer isn't stopping. Rich believes there is still another big hit in his future.

"[Jud and I] were classic R&B/Pop balladeers, but getting a song to break through on the charts is very difficult today," Rich laments. "I still feel I have so much I want to say."

But Rich isn't just resting on his lyrics. He is currently the executive producer of the documentary "Viva Verdi" about the Verdi Opera House in Italy, and he received a Daytime Emmy nomination as the co-executive producer (with his twin brother!) on Season 2 of the multiple Emmy Award-winning Kevin Spirtas/Michael Slade-scripted digital series "After Forever" on Prime.

This former singer now performs his songs on cruise ships and also mentors younger students at the Musicians Institute in Hollywood, giving honest advice from a career well-lived.

"You can be a songwriter for your whole life and still never break through, so you're really taking a chance," Rich admits. "Where I thought I fell short is I didn't take the music business as seriously as a business as I should have."

However, the ever-so-humble Rich certainly made his mark in the music industry, and he has gold and platinum records to prove it. He would make a copy for each one and send it to his parents, who would then hang them on the wall outside their bedroom.

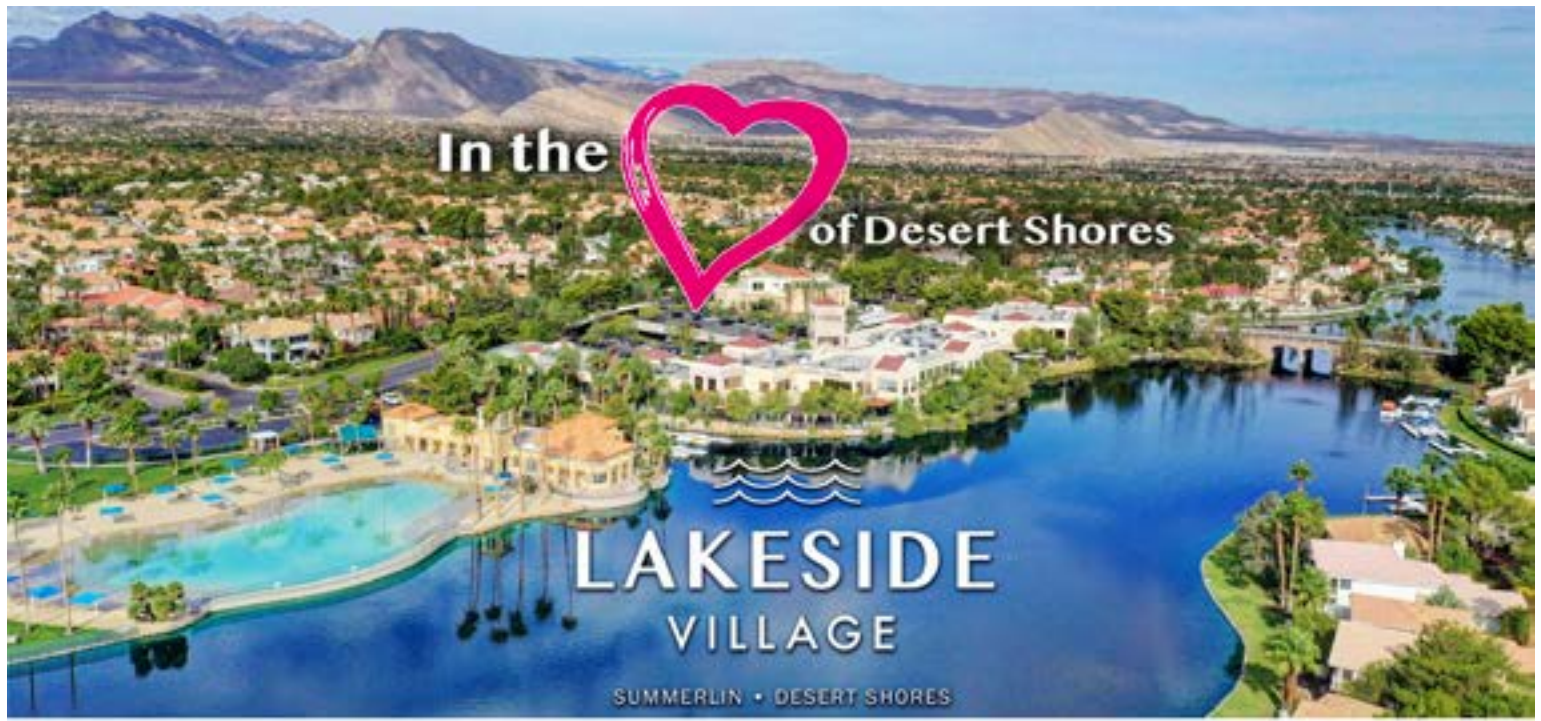


"I said, 'Dad, why did you put all the gold and platinum records on THAT wall?'"

"My father said, 'So even when I'm sleeping, I could see them.' That, to me, was his way of saying he was proud of me."

Above: Photo of Allan Rich by Jaime Lim (Liquid Star Photography)

All it took was a five-year-old Jewish boy from Brooklyn listening to his father's Victrola to leave such a rich musical legacy. Fortunately, his coda is still being written.



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A DIAMOND IN THE DESERT

THE JUNGLE PALACE SHINES AGAIN UNDER LOVING CARE

By Debbie Hall

When an oasis was discovered in the desert of the Southwest, it was christened Las Vegas, becoming a beacon for an over-the-top destination attracting the most colorful characters. Its neon lights drew two German magicians and performers, Siegfried Fischbacher and Roy Horn, who would create a legacy for the city. Part of that legacy was their mansion, known as The Jungle Palace. This historic landmark, a testament to the grandeur and history of Las Vegas, is being revitalized, and its legacy is being preserved by its new, larger-than-life owner George Carden.

George, a man whose destiny was always intertwined with the circus, shares a deep connection with Siegfried and Roy. If not for the circus running through his DNA, he might have found himself on the iconic Strip, connecting with the duo. Their shared passion for entertainment and love for Las Vegas is a bond beyond words.

There was a time when people who were free-thinking and adventurous dreamed of "running away to join the circus." George's destiny of living life in the Big Top began when he was only five years old. He was walking with his mother to the barbershop in Springfield, Missouri, when a man

offered them tickets to the circus at the Shrine Mosque in Lincoln, Nebraska. They decided to attend, and later, Larry Carden, the man who had given them the tickets, would marry George's mother and adopt him. Larry owned the Carden International Circus for 17 years, and George eventually bought the circus from him. George renamed it the George Carden International Circus, and he ran it for 42 years before his son purchased it and took over with the original name. George is a man who truly appreciates the talents of Siegfried and Roy, who also lived their dreams while making the world a better place and leaving a legacy for the future.



This shared dream and legacy is what inspires George.

The incredible journey of Siegfried and Roy, a testament to their talent and perseverance, began on a cruise ship. They honed their craft together in various European venues before their star ascended in 1967 with an invitation to perform in Las Vegas. Their crowning achievement came in 1990 when they became headliners at The Mirage casino resort, signing a lifetime contract that would forever cement their place in Las Vegas history and connection with The Jungle Palace.

In the 1980s, Siegfried and Roy began living in The Jungle Palace, an 18,295-square-foot house built in 1954. The property also featured three smaller guest houses, each with a tiger pool and a waterfall.

This compound was created as a habitat for their white tigers, horses, mini-donkeys, black swans, exotic chickens, African cranes, royal turkeys, dogs, domestic cats, and a bird preserve. The main house where Siegfried and Roy lived is 8,750 square feet with two bedrooms, four bathrooms, a library, custom-made stained-

glass skylights and windows, an indoor jacuzzi, and animal enclosures. Electric gates protected the animals and residents, and the smaller houses were converted into offices.

The Jungle Palace has been transformed into a private art gallery and museum throughout the years. It has exquisite decorations, including gold candelabras gifted to it by Liberace. Another treasure is a jewel-encrusted sword believed to have once belonged to Genghis Khan. There is also a 5,000-pound silver tiger figure from India. While they did not



open their home to the general public, it was an honor and lifetime memory for those invited into their sanctuary.

The bright glow with shining stars in the middle of the desert would draw George and his wife, Alexandra Castro, a former circus star in her own right, to Las Vegas many times, with George's first visit in 1980. The magnet of Las Vegas would bring George to the city to produce circus shows at The Orleans Hotel & Casino, and South Point Hotel Casino &

Spa starting in 2015.

George would get to meet Siegfried and Roy when his friend brought the pair to George's show.

"It was such a great honor to meet them. I set up a red couch for them to enjoy the show," says George. "Then I was in Mexico City with Siegfried for [Mr.] Tihany's 90th birthday, and I got to know them a little bit, which made it even more special to restore their home to its previous glory and share it

with the world. I certainly never dreamed that I would one day own their mansion. This personal connection and shared history add a layer of emotion and significance to the restoration project."

After Roy's passing in 2020 and Siegfried's passing in 2021, the mansion was put up for sale and sold. Hundreds of their furnishings and treasures were auctioned off to benefit their foundation, The Sarmoti Foundation, which was setup to help animals.

However, history is not cherished in Las Vegas. Historic and iconic buildings and landmarks are bulldozed every day. Only a few, such as Liberace's Las Vegas home, are saved when individuals purchase the property to refurbish it for future generations. This was going to be the fate of The Jungle Palace when it was announced that the compound would be demolished so an apartment complex or small houses could be built on the land.

George was livid.

"My wife and I were sitting together, and my wife was scrolling on her phone when she told me that Siegfried and Roy's property was for sale. I asked how much, and she told me the price was \$3 million. I had never seen the house before, but I got the number and called the person handling the sale. I told him it was sold; I am buying the house and the property," explains George. It only took one day to save the mansion.

However, its beautiful furnishings and treasures were another story since they had been sold off. George could track most of them and buy back most of the belongings auctioned off in California to be returned to the Las Vegas mansion. Most of The Jungle Palace is restored with its original furnishings and treasures.

"I am so honored to own this mansion and make it a successful venue. I want people to be proud of it, especially from Germany and around the world. This will be a chance for people to see it," says George.

George wants to open the home to high-end weddings and parties so that people can enjoy its

legacy while preserving priceless entertainment history. He plans to incorporate artificial animals into the places that once housed live animals.

Like Siegfried and Roy, The Carden International Circus is committed to the exceptional care and ethical treatment of all animals.

"We believe in the animal and human relationships built upon respect, trust, affection, and uncompromising care," says George. For this reason, The Jungle Palace will not become a habitat for live animals for their care and safety. The replication of spectacular animals and statutes will showcase Siegfried and Roy's love for all an-

imals without putting any animal or person in danger.

Still, the property will be available for traditional weddings and special and corporate events for people from around the world to enjoy the magic of the Jungle Palace.

Now, the couple will fit in as part-time residents of Nevada, along with Florida and Missouri, with all the intriguing characters in Las Vegas, especially Siegfried and Roy.

"The Jungle Palace is precious to me and will be kept in the Carden family. It will be uplifting and made into the most beautiful mansion in Las Vegas, and we look forward to it being admired and cherished for many years."



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A TRAILBLAZER AND HISTORY MAKER

Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino Turns 55

By Heather Turk / Photography courtesy of
Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino



Celebrating its 55th anniversary on July 2, Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino may have had a few name changes since its days as the International Hotel and the Las Vegas Hilton, but there's no doubt the off-Strip property has become one of Las Vegas' most iconic resorts.

A star in its own right, the legendary property has welcomed countless celebrities ever since Barbra Streisand opened its showroom in 1969. Although best known for being the theater where Elvis Presley performed 636 consecutive sold-out shows spanning seven years, the list of artists who have performed inside the International Theater over the decades reads like a "Who's Who in Entertainment," according to Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino's Vice President of Public & Community Relations, Gordon Prouty. Johnny Cash, Wayne Newton, Suzanne Somers, Ann-Margret, Liberace, Tina Turner, and Reba McEntire are just some of the many names who have performed on the International Theater's stage, with Liberace being the first Las Vegas performer to ever "fly" onstage. Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Starlight Express" was also staged inside the International Theater from Sept. 14, 1993, until Nov. 30, 1997, marking the first permanent production

In a city known for demolishing its classic resorts, Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino still stands tall.



of a legitimate musical theater show in the Entertainment Capital of the World's history.

"Some of the best stories I've heard over the years come from team members and their recollections and memories of some of the entertainers and celebrities who have performed here or stayed here," Prouty told *Chic Compass*. "Things like Elvis giving a team member a car, or Liberace walking with a team member and holding his umbrella over her head when it was raining and he saw her running to the entrance."

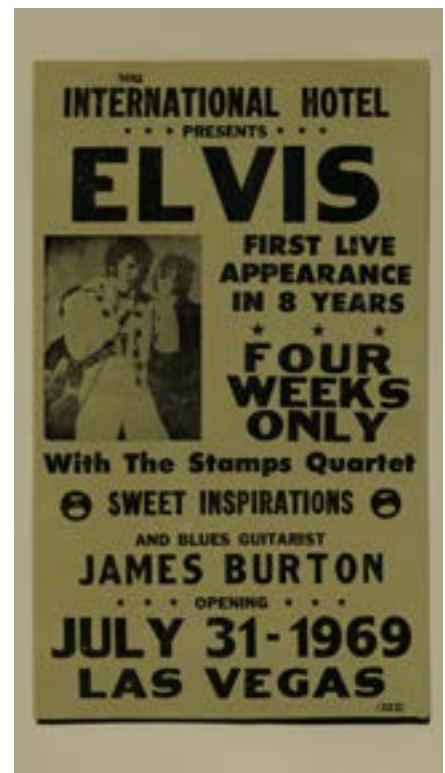
Several movies and TV shows have been filmed at the property over the years, including the James Bond classic "Diamonds Are Forever," "Indecent Proposal" and "Roseanne." Scenes from the Emmy Award-winning "Behind the Candelabra" were also filmed in the resort's opulent Verona Sky Villa, which at 15,400 square feet is one of, if not the, largest hotel room in the world.

Today, Westgate Las Vegas continues to acknowledge its rich entertainment history while simultaneously adding to its legacy. Last July, the resort welcomed "My Brother Elvis" to its entertainment lineup, a monthly event Prouty hosts that takes Elvis fans on a backstage tour of the International Theater. As cool as it is to walk into Elvis Presley's dressing room and drink from the water fountain he once drank from, the highlight of the evening is when guests get to sit on the International Theater stage and listen to Presley's stepbrother, David Stanley, tell stories about what it was like growing up with and later working for The King of Rock 'n' Roll. Stanley also takes a few questions from guests, guaranteeing that every "My Brother Elvis" experience is unique.

History continues to be made inside the International Theater, as last September, Barry Manilow surpassed Elvis Presley's record for the most performances on the

Above: A vintage photograph of Elvis Presley heading to perform at the International Theater. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Below: July 31 marks the 55th anniversary of Elvis Presley's first of 636 consecutive sold-out shows inside the International Theater. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino



International Theater stage. Returning June 13 through 15, Manilow's "The Hits Come Home!" remains one of Las Vegas' best residencies. The toe-tapping production features the singer-songwriter performing his catalog of timeless hits, including "Mandy," "Looks Like We Made It," and "Copacabana (At the Copa)."

Manilow isn't the only big-name act that currently calls the International Theater their home away from home. Both Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons and legendary funk group Kool & The Gang kicked off their own residencies inside the venue last October, with Kool & The Gang scheduled to return to the International Theater stage on May 24 and 25.

While Westgate Las Vegas is home to several other can't-miss acts—including magician Jen Kramer, who holds the honor of having the longest-running resi-



dency by a female magician in Las Vegas history—the property hasn't been around for nearly 55 years based on its entertainment lineup alone. The resort also

boasts some of the city's best restaurants, including arguably the most beautiful Benihana in the world. Fresco Italiano is another primo dining pick deservedly rated as one of TripAdvisor's top Italian restaurants in Las Vegas. Its ricotta-stuffed eggplant appetizer is absolutely scrumptious, and its Roasted Half Chicken Marsala is, as one of the restaurant's servers recently described, "the chef's kiss."

The spa at Westgate Las Vegas is also one of the city's best-kept

Above: It's easy to become a Fanilow after seeing Barry Manilow's "The Hits Come Home!" Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Left: Fresco Italiano serves impeccable Italian cuisine nightly for dinner. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino



secrets. Located on the resort's spacious pool deck, Serenity Spa by Westgate features eight cozy treatment rooms and separate men's and women's whirlpools and saunas to enjoy before or after a treatment. Couples looking to unwind together can book a variety of side-by-side massages, like the soothing Aromatherapy Massage that uses warm towels and body and massage oil blends made with unadulterated essential oils from TARA's Aroma Wellness collection to help relieve tension and leave guests feeling rejuvenated.

Although Westgate Las Vegas' amenities, including a state-of-the-art fitness center, four tennis courts, and eight pickleball courts, are impressive, its extensive selection of hotel rooms is truly astonishing. Paying homage to the International Hotel, where each floor featured a Spanish, Italian, or French theme, Westgate Las Vegas offers several unique themed hotel suites.

Its 3,096-square-foot Country



Club High Roller Suite, for example, features a billiards table and a long solarium-like balcony that overlooks the city. Over the past year, the property has unveiled several more playful suites, including a Christmas Suite with three fully decorated Christmas trees. There's also a Plaid Suite with padded plaid walls and artwork featuring Elvis in a plaid jumpsuit, and an all-black Halloween Suite with hidden clowns behind closed closet doors and curtains (hi, Pennywise!) and a giant spider over the bed.

While more themed suites are on the horizon, Westgate Las Vegas has plenty of non-themed hotel rooms, too, including 132 luxurious one-bedroom villas with a kitchen, a spacious shower, and a jacuzzi tub with multicolored lights. The resort also recently finished \$70 million worth of room renovations in its East Tower, ensuring every hotel room offers guests an experience fit for a king.

As Westgate Las Vegas gets ready to celebrate its 55th anniversary, several exciting giveaways and large events are in the works for the public to enjoy. The resort also plans to host a team member reunion to pay tribute to those it credits the property's ongoing success.

Above: Serenity Spa by Westgate offers guests the ultimate relaxing retreat. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Left: It's impossible to feel anything but merry inside Westgate Las Vegas' 1,500-square-foot Christmas Suite. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino





Above: Horror fans are sure to have sweet dreams inside Westgate Las Vegas' 1,160-square-foot Halloween Suite. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Below: Westgate Las Vegas' 1,000-square-foot Plaid Suite opened this past February. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino





Above: Westgate Las Vegas' extravagant Verona Sky Villa has three king beds. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Below: Westgate Las Vegas' 400-square-foot Premier King Room, part of the property's recent \$70 million East Tower renovation project. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino



"Sure, we've had outstanding entertainment, amazing restaurants, a variety of beautiful accommodations, the world's largest race and sports book, state-of-the-art meeting and convention space, and ongoing investments in property improvements, but our people make the difference," Prouty stated. "We have one team member, Angel Lopez Rosas, who has been here since day one and has always been an usher. We have three other team members who have been here more than 50 years: bellmen Earl Manson and Alonzo Langstaff, and Felix Morales, a server at Edge Steakhouse. We have more than 60 active team members who have worked at this property for more than 40 years, and they are all celebrated with their photo on the 40-Year Wall we have on property. Nearly 25 percent of our team members have been with us for 20 years or more, and they take great pride in providing the best possible guest experience and outstanding service. They really make the difference and are vital to our continued success."



Top Right: Liberace and Barbra Streisand, two of the many A-list artists who have performed on the International Theater stage. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Middle Right: Wayne Newton performed more than 950 shows at the International Theater (then known as the Hilton Showroom) from 1987 to 1993. Photo courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino

Bottom Right: Hear Kool & The Gang perform their greatest hits when the band resumes their residency over Memorial Day weekend. Photo by Joshua Atkins





With transportation options continuing to develop, including Elon Musk’s Vegas Loop, which will soon have two Tesla tunnels at the resort, Prouty thinks the future continues to look bright for Westgate Las Vegas as the distinction between on-strip and off-strip fades away. Cami Christensen, Westgate Las Vegas’ president and general manager who started as an assistant hotel manager at the Las Vegas Hilton, couldn’t agree more.

“I fully expect 55 years from now, the property will be celebrating its 110th anniversary,” Christensen said. “I’ve been here for 23 years and always said this property has a special soul. It’s a legendary place that has survived and thrived through all the changes and challenges we’ve seen here in Las Vegas, and I fully expect that to continue in the years to come. It’s exciting to think about what the next 55 years will bring.”

For more on Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino and its upcoming anniversary festivities, visit westgatelasvegas.com.

Top Left: Though Elvis Presley may have left the building decades ago, there’s still a statue of him on display near the check-in area.

Left: Barbra Streisand performing at the opening night of the International Hotel in 1969.

Photos courtesy of Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino





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IT BEGAN WITH ONE BAG OF DOG FOOD

Street Dogz Care For Homeless Pets and Their Humans for 10 Years

By Debbie Hall / Photography courtesy of Street Dogz

Editor's Note: This article about Street Dogz is dedicated to Sarah St. Claire, cousin of the publisher Ann Parenti. Sarah passed away three years ago and was devoted to helping animals. She also believed in the magazine and, at the end of her life, helped to fund it with her trust. As Sarah embraces all the animals on the Rainbow Bridge, let's help those who still inhabit the planet.

Pets, reliant on their fur parents for care, face a dire situation. The financial crisis gripping Southern Nevada and the entire country leaves them vulnerable. In this challenging time, Street Dogz, a nonprofit organization celebrating 10 years, is stepping up to assist these animals and their humans.

It all started with one bag of dog food.

Nevada native and founder of Street Dogz Cheryl Noori



Street Dogz also help the unhoused and homeless as well as their pets.

worked at Citigroup for 25 years until the recession of 2008, when Citigroup moved its company out of Nevada. She changed her career trajectory when Noori accepted a job in the welfare department of the state of Nevada. This was a new experience for her since Noori had never worked in social services.

She was placed in the offices of Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada and The Courtyard in downtown Las Vegas, surrounded by a sizeable unhoused population.

“My new boss was cleaning out an office and found a bag of dog food. She asked if I wanted it, and I said I would put it in my car since I didn’t need it. The next day, I saw a man standing in line with a chihuahua and offered him the dog food. He got so emotional, and I was so touched. I decided to bring some bags of dog food to the office and give it out. I put it on Facebook, and then everyone started donating dog

food, leashes, and collars. This grew organically as a community-based organization,” explains Noori.

Initially, three people, including Noori, discussed the need to help dogs, especially those cared for by the unhoused and homeless population. One person dropped out, but Noori and her friend Melody Christian continued and started creating a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

“I must admit we were so excited we went on LegalZoom and started the process that day. Melody filled out the forms, brainstormed the name Street Dogz, came up with a tagline, ‘Feeding dogs in need (and cats too!),’ and created the Street Dogz Facebook page. But we didn’t realize that much more needed to be done. Someone we knew from an animal rescue organization, Darlene Blair, helped us complete what we needed,” says Noori. The organization became a nonprofit agency in March 2015.

Donations range from giving the man a three-pound pet food bag for his little dog to distributing 4,000 to 6,000 pounds of dry food and thousands of cans of wet food monthly.

The services soon expanded to include spay and neuter, vaccination clinics, and dog shoes. Street Dogz is believed to be the first group to give out dog shoes for homeless pets in Las Vegas. Other services include medical care, day boarding, paying shelter fees for pets in the shelters, temporary and permanent housing for people and their pets, and employment assistance.

Initially, the organization was based in Noori’s garage, but in June 2019, a home in central Las Vegas called “The Clubhouse” became its center.

“If we lost The Clubhouse, we would have to shut down the organization. It is that important to our organization,” says Noori.

In 2015, they partnered with The Giving Project, a homeless outreach event run by Las Vegas Metro Police Department (LVMPD) Homeless Outreach Officer Anne Wilson. It was its first community event and really brought attention to their cause. They started receiving donations of human food, clothing, blankets, pet food, and supplies to distribute at this monthly event.

In 2016, they created the Off The Streetz program to get pets and humans out of the hot summers and expanded it to Off The



Street Dogz holds popups to help the entire community.

Streetz Christmas, which included a week inside a motel (Super 8) over the holiday, meals, and gifts. That is a top-rated program in the community.

In 2017, they received an RTC bus pass grant to give to clients, and it continues to help those with public transportation. Rideshare can be arranged if the dog or cat has to go to the vet or attend one of their events. They have transported animals to other states in emergency situations. The Street Cats LV Facebook page was created to show the feral cat problem witnessed during deliveries and offer help.

In 2018, they selected distribution sites instead of delivering to individuals. Several zips with the highest need were chosen each month, with a specific day, time, and location. The current schedule is always posted on their website and Facebook page. Dogs are required to be brought to receive food and other doggie needs, but cats are not.

Volunteers Michael and Dolores donated a 2012 top-of-the-line Chrysler van with 200,000 miles to Street Dogz two years ago. It is the only vehicle they have to make deliveries, pick up donations, and transport clients and pets. However, it still runs and is another critical asset to continuing to help pets.

“Homeless pets are our priority. People think of us as only serving homeless pets, but we have more housed clients than homeless,” says Noori. “We started to get



Grooming is one of the services provided by Street Dogz.

grants, and beginning in 2021, we could help anyone who called. All American Animal Hospital worked with us and helped hundreds of dogs and cats.”

Unfortunately, the grants ended in 2022, and the organization focused more on its mission to help homeless and unhoused pets and their humans stay together and meet their pets’ needs. Sadly, with the rising gas prices and burnout rates, Street Dogz can no longer deliver to seniors, people with disabilities, and others who live in the dwellings.

One requirement for help is that the pets be allowed to be spayed or neutered by Street Dogz, who

will pay for the procedure. Still, many refuse.

“We struggle with this, but it is vital that we take care of the pets this way. Along with paying for the procedure, we also provide transportation and take care of any other needs,” states Noori.

Their program, Off the Streetz, helps homeless dogs or cats who had recently had spay or neuter surgery recuperate for a few days before hitting the streets again. Since then, it has morphed into providing respite during Christmas week, cold nights, and days when temperatures climb over 110 degrees.

Today, Noori works as a welfare case worker at the Clark County Detention Center, so she is very familiar with the system and those who are a part of it. One of her two daughters volunteers at The Clubhouse. The organization has 40 volunteers, with 15 volunteering 10 to 60 hours weekly. Their outreach volunteer works with the unhoused and homeless population, delivering to those areas. The medical director handles all the medical, boarding, and adoptions. The Clubhouse crew volunteers at different hours and positions, from donation drop-offs, providing pet food to clients, and managing inventory to weekly donation pick-up and transport. The events and distribution crew reaches out to local businesses for donations along with the communications volunteer. Volunteers manage social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. The rest of the team volunteers as needed when miscellaneous requests arise.

It is important to emphasize that Street Dogz is not a rescue group. Their goal is to keep pet(s) with their humans together and ensure that unhoused/homeless pets have their needs met.

The need is even greater today.

After the pandemic, the financial landscape of Southern Nevada has dramatically changed, including the cost of living and housing, which affects pet parents. According to U.S. News, Las Vegas ranks No. 11 of the top 25 cities in the country with homeless/unhoused populations. Many un-



Above: Street Dogz helps cats too.

Below: This dog has found a favorite toy through Street Dogz.



housed live with their pets in cars when not couch surfing.

According to the personal finance site SmartAsset, which recently reviewed data from the MIT Living Wage Calculator and estimated the living wage needed to meet needs, an annual salary for a single person to live “comfortably” in Southern Nevada is \$94,432. A salary of \$239,366 would be required for two working adults with two children.

Street Dogz has posted that in a single night in 2023, 6,566 people were identified by the Point-in-Time Count as homeless in Southern Nevada, with more than half unsheltered (60%). They estimate they distribute 7,000 pounds of dry food and help 550 pets and 200 households monthly. Everything is donated, except for food purchased when available, from the Nevada Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA) Greater Good Food Bank at a discount.

One person performs deliveries, and she makes 30 to 40 trips to areas with a large unhoused and homeless population every month. Since 2020, they have partnered with FirstMed Health and Wellness to provide temporary housing for clients with pets, and in 2023, 22 people were helped, and seven of those people had employment and permanent housing. Street Dogz has also partnered with Caridad, a nonprofit organization that operates Hebron, a low-income housing complex for veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and

seniors. For unhoused and homeless people who are hospitalized or in jail, their pet(s) will go to the shelter for 10 days, and then the shelter will call Street Dogz to pick up the pet(s) to be boarded. On some occasions, there are adoptions and mascots as well.

Street Dogz wants to help as the rate of homelessness increases. The issue of homelessness and the unhoused will not disappear overnight, but they hope to make a difference in the lives of those affected by it. Many measures are in place to address pet homelessness, such as spaying, neutering, fostering, and shelters. However, Street Dogz takes a different, preventive approach, ensuring that pets are not surrendered in the first place. Their goal is to as-

sist pets of people experiencing homelessness and those in need by providing food and supplies, helping with funding for spaying and neutering, catering to special dietary needs, medications, and vaccinations, and working on providing temporary housing for pets. Apart from offering material support, their philosophy is that their efforts to help people care for their animal companions provide them with a sense of dignity, comfort, and hope.

Email help@streetdogzlv.org for more information, to volunteer or donate, or visit streetdogzlv.org, and follow @StreetDogzLV on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter).



It gets hots on the pavement in Southern Nevada and Street Dogz gives dogs shoes.



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hope

WOMEN UNITED

The Heart and Hope of United Way Southern Nevada

By Joan S. Peck / Photography courtesy of Women United

When it rains in Las Vegas, most of us hesitate to get into the car and drive through the valley, but I did so the other day and am so grateful I had. I was pleased to meet the dynamic Dana Boldizar, Manager of Fund Development and Women United for United Way Southern Nevada (UWSN).

The silver-haired beauty is tall and held her body like the ballerina she was as a child, and she greeted me with a broad smile and sparkly eyes. Yet, what drew my attention was the gentle powerhouse energy emanating from her. She is a woman who gets things done, and does she ever! Our good fortune is that Dana is here in Las Vegas, working for UWSN. Curious to know, I asked, "Why Las Vegas?"

"After caring for my mother-in-law for 18 years and her death at 99, my husband, Joseph, and I felt it



Dana Boldizar, Manager of Fund Development and Women United for United Way Southern Nevada



Women United clothing drive with Lighthouse Charities

was time for a change away from the mosquitoes, bugs, and mold of Florida. My sister, whom I am close to, lives here. We arrived in Vegas from Orlando four years ago during the pandemic.”

How are they enjoying Vegas? “No matter where you are in town, you can be downtown in 20 minutes or head up to Mt. Charleston to enjoy a quick adventure.

After leaving the land of Disney, my husband and I enjoy the nightlife of entrainment, theater, history, and an array of incredible options for your choice of gourmet food! We love the grown-up lifestyle in Viva Las Vegas!”

Considering Dana’s background, it may not be surprising that she chose to become part of a non-profit. Her former high manage-

ment positions and skills have always extended beyond the job to help others, particularly women, get ahead.

“Finding women with no voice and helping them discover their power to do what is necessary to get ahead. Working for six years at Best Buy as general manager, I traveled the country a lot and coached 15 such women, with nine becoming store managers in their location.”

See what I mean?

Unable to attend college financially, Dana jumped into the workforce, leading her in 1989 to become the Regional Manager for Zales Jewelers for 16 years, covering Orlando, Tampa, and Atlanta. Moving to the Atlanta area, she was the regional manager for Luxottica Retail before

she was wooed to become the general manager of Best Buy in Winter Garden, Florida.

With her many needed skills and plenty of experience, Dana is a perfect fit for the role of fund development for United Way Southern Nevada. When meeting a prospective donor, she asks, “Do you know where your money goes?”

Discovering all that UWSN does and is financially responsible for it is impressive. In 2023, United Way of Southern Nevada invested \$14 million in private and public funding to 80 organizations in the valley. “Their generosity has touched many causes and efforts to strengthen and improve our community for those needing help. We hope to do the same this year,” Dana says.

Project Reach is a utility assistance program designed to help adults 62 and older who meet income guidelines and are experiencing economic hardship.

UWSN's Community Impact Program Portfolio is mind-blowing when you learn they oversee and manage more than \$14 million in community funds to advance Student Success, Workforce Development, and Community Support.

- Student Success is a set of state-funded and donor-funded programs that advance pathways toward student success from Pre-K through K-12 years into higher education and early career.
- Workforce Development is a set of donor-funded programs that advance pathways to adult education and workforce participation for people facing additional barriers to employment.
- Community Support is a set of federally-funded, state-funded, corporate-funded, and donor-funded programs that advance pathways out of crisis and toward a better quality of life for people living in low-income households and communities.

All of which brings hope to those needing assistance.

What would Dana like to change/add in the future for UWSN? "The expansion of programs that directly impact Southern Nevadans and increased advocacy efforts that result in funding to help improve the lives of community

members, ensuring we are in the community meeting individuals unaware of how United Way can impact a city like ours."

WOMEN UNITED

Dana manages Women United, a group of women who meet once a month to make a difference. It's interesting to note that in 2007, Women United was called the Women's Leadership Council, with its mission *uniting women to make a difference*.

In 2024, its mission was further developed to engage and develop our members to be *leaders in creating impactful change in our community through education, health, and financial stability*.

Asked if she had any input to the change, Dana responded, "As a giving member of Women United, I wanted to ensure we stayed very current with our mental state by showing well-being and self-agency to ourselves and others."

Women United members are dedicated to supporting emerging female leaders in Southern Nevada and empowering girls from a young age. As a member, you are part of a donor society committed to one of five different giving levels: \$1,000, \$1,500, \$2,500, \$5,000, and \$10,000 annually.

What are the benefits of becoming a \$1,000 donor and above?

- Gain a network of women to support you and make a meaningful impact in your community.
- Enjoy UWSN, Lunch & Learns, and Women United Speaker Series
- Invitation to join the Women United Leadership Event, Scholarship, Suit Drive, and Funding Committee.
- Utilize UWSN as a resource for information for community focus or questions.
- Invitations to volunteer and attend social events.



Women United clothing drive with the Shade Tree



Women United Suit Drive committee and volunteers help facilitate clothing donations every fall.

Women United has invested \$3.5 million and committed more than 8,200 volunteer hours to improve lives in Southern Nevada.

Two key focus areas in the community are the Suit Drive that is held every fall and 15 nonprofits share sustainable clothing donated for women to be able to get back to work, face a day in court regarding a custody battle for their children, or face a predator who has created fear in her and her children's lives—giving a woman a sense of confidence and pride to move gracefully into her next chapter with hope in her heart.

This event/fundraiser also helps fund four young women to receive a four-year scholarship called the Women United Emerging Leadership Award for Women. So far, we have had eight graduates, many of whom have become educators, nurses, financial advisors,

and biological science leaders in our community. Many of our graduates are first-generation graduates in their families.

So, what was next up for Women United? A fun fashion show at Red Rock Casino Resort & Spa on Saturday, April 13, 2024. The theme for this luncheon was *Women on the Move*, which honored "the incredible women that infuse hope, generosity, and bold vision into the Las Vegas community." It was a day of fashion, inspiration, and empowerment. The fashion show allows us to continue funding projects in our community.

What would Dana like to change/add for Women United? "Empowerment programs that will help provide women with skills, resources, and support networks to thrive, such as mentorship, leadership development, and financial literacy. Increased membership

to amplify WU's mission and impact. More membership dollars will allow the group to do more good in the community. Increased community outreach to help more women thrive personally and professionally."

Finding pleasure and satisfaction within her job, Dana also has a life outside her work. Where is Dana's happy place? "Growing up in Colorado for 22 years gave me an outdoor spirit. I'm happy within nature, where I can appreciate our planet Earth! Gardening gives me a calm moment throughout the seasons, and I keep a journal of how the seasons change each year. Yoga and physical movement allow the cracks and pops to feel better and age gracefully. Dancing in the living room to an old country song or enjoying a movie is nice to step away from routine. I'm celebrating 35 years of marriage to the love of my life, Joseph Boldizar—another happy place."

Asked how Dana would like to be remembered, "Having a caring heart and lots of love to share. A soul that gave you positive light and energy to be stronger than you were yesterday."

By all that Dana has done and continues to do with her work at United Way of Southern Nevada and Women United, I believe she is remembered already. Add to that, the Women United values – equality, belonging, well-being, community, integrity, and self-agency. If we all lived following these values, we could all sing, "What a wonderful world!"

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SEÑORAS OF EXCELLENCE SEÑORES OF DISTINCTION AWARDS GALA

By Chanelle Hayes / Photography courtesy of Cashman Photo

The late Sandy Colón Peltyn was a career-driven woman who dedicated her life to giving back to the community. Her love for philanthropy resulted in her forming the Sandy Peltyn Foundation of Excellence, a nonprofit organization supporting the educational growth of young Latinos in the Las Vegas community through events such as the annual Señoritas of Excellence Señores of Distinction Awards Gala.

"I met Sandy in 2003 when she hosted her first gala," says Maggie Arias-Petrel, currently serving as the president of the Sandy Peltyn Foundation of Excellence. "I wanted to learn more about her nonprofit and the gala. We kept in touch and got to know each other better." Arias-Petrel and Peltyn formed a strong bond and were close-knit until her passing in 2018. "Sandy was like a big sister to me and an incredible mentor from whom I learned a lot."

Arias-Petrel continues to honor the life and legacy of Peltyn with the support of distinguished community leaders who serve as board members, such as Robert Dolan, Linda Esposito, Lynette Chappelle, Laurie Travis, Judy Fleishman, Ixela Gutierrez, RayAnn Arguello, Brisa Arana, Patricia Alcalde, alongside with R.J. Peltyn, Sandy's son, who is also devoted to the cause initiated by Sandy.

Together, they plan the Señoritas of

Excellence Señores of Distinction Awards Gala, an elegant night with dinner, entertainment, dancing, music, and a live auction. The gala benefits Latino students pursuing higher education and has generated more than 5,000 scholarships for high school students in Nevada.

The Sandy Peltyn Foundation of Excellence is looking to expand the scholarship program with help from the National Institute for the Advancement of Education, which works to transform education through innovation, excellence, evidence, and equity. "They will assist us with research and studies to see where the population needs financial education assistance the most," Arias-Petrel said. "For instance, we need more careers in healthcare. We have a huge shortage of medi-

cal providers at all levels—not just doctors—we need nurses, CNAs, therapists, middle-level providers, and technicians. Another area we would like to focus on is education because of the shortage of teachers and educators. We want to help more students benefit from this scholarship."

Besides honoring students and past scholarship recipients, the Señoras of Excellence Señores of Distinction Awards Gala recognizes women and men who impact the Las Vegas community and support the Sandy Peltyn Foundation of Excellence's mission. The foundation selects two recipients each year for the Señoras of Excellence and Señores of Distinction awards.

Arias-Petrel and her team look for many qualities when selecting

who to honor. "For the Señoras of Excellence award, we choose a woman who demonstrates what a señora is: someone loyal to family and friends, confident in her beliefs, and is an exceptional listener in every capacity. She is thoughtful, trustworthy, courageous, caring, and inspirational. For the Señores of Distinction award, we think about a man we admire who raises our spirits and never lets us down. He makes sacrifices, shows strength, bases his life on principles, achieves goals he sets for himself, and reaches success and brings others with him."

The Señoras of Excellence Señores of Distinction Awards Gala was Sandy's pride and passion. Thanks to the Sandy Peltyn Foundation of Excellence, the event gets bigger and big-





ger each year, keeping Sandy's dream alive by bringing the community together for a night of recognition and celebration. "Sandy is somebody that will forever live in our hearts," Arias-Petrel said. "Still, to this day, if you go anywhere and mention her name, everybody knows and remembers her."

To learn more about the Señoras of Excellence Señoras of Distinction Awards Gala and other ways to support the Sandy Peltyn Foundation of Excellence, visit www.sandypeltynfoundation.org.





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grace

PERMISSION TO FAIL

Grace... the Pathway to Success

By Stephanie Bolton

The situation ... well, it was complicated. The decision to continue his professional dancing career versus returning to his home, layered with leaving all family, all friends, and his life as he knew it... was challenging and clear. Ray Guzman made the life-altering, difficult, yet defiant choice.

When Siegfried Fischbacher and Roy Horn (German-American magicians and entertainers) brought *Havana Night Club The Show* to the Stardust Resort and Casino in 2004, Ray was a dancer with the fifty-three Cuban performers, seeking asylum in the United States, in one of the largest single mass defection of people from Cuba. November 15, 2004, CBS reported, "The performers arrived by bus at the federal courthouse in Las Vegas, where they submitted paperwork for asylum."

Ray and other troupe members chose to petition to stay because,



with the political climate in their country, repercussions would be dire. If they returned to Havana, they would be forced to stop performing and face the possibility of being incarcerated, among other possible punishments, as Cuban authorities did not want them to perform in the United States at all and had not granted them permission.

Photo of Ray Guzman owner/franchisee Arthur Murray Centennial, Las Vegas, Nevada by StephBVoices

Fidel Castro was the Cuban revolutionary and political leader as Prime Minister from 1959-1976 and President from 1976-2008. During Castro's leadership, Cuba was transformed into the first communist state in the Western Hemisphere.



Arthur Murray Centennial staff and students at Arthur Murray Showcase. Photo by Jaden Jones.

It was unfathomable to Ray to no longer dance. It was what he was “groomed for.” It was the path his parents, both dancers, had set for him from birth. Dance was all he had seen. Dance was what he knew. Before beginning his dance studies at age 12 at The Academy of Dance in Santiago de Cuba, little Ray’s dancer body was massaged, manipulated, and prepared for the dance disciplines he would engage in. Foot stretching, knee stretching, squats, splits, lunges, and more were a regular part of his young life. Dance futures in Cuba were set similarly to the Russian-type disciplines and pre-ordained paths. He began his formal training with ballet. With the sweet flavor of his Cuban accent, he pronounces the word “bahl-lett.”

“I moved on to other specialties and dance styles within dancing, the community, and the school.” Ray continues, his cultural pride beaming, “Dancing and music in Cuba is like water for us. That’s

what we do. We create music, and we create dancing.”

He immediately interjects a comment to clarify the difference between social dance and the formally structured, classically-trained dance study he pursued as a career.

He was so dynamically prepared that when the delegates responsible for searching the provinces and attaining young talent saw him audition, he NAILED it! As a young child, dance was decided for him. As he became a young adult, he began to see the value of what he was doing. He tested well as he advanced to different levels then, tested out and moved on to the National school. At this point, he fell in love with dance. He was offered the opportunity to attend a college-level school, which he refused. He was now a professional professor/dancer. As a professional dancer/instructor AND professional performer, he enjoyed it.

With his well-trained and accomplished talent, he auditioned in Havana and became a dancer for the best dance company at the time, *Havana Night Club The Show*. With the company, he traveled the world. They performed in Germany, Singapore, Thailand, Spain, and Mexico, to name a few. His world was getting larger. He became acutely aware that there were options for how one could live one’s life. He began to see possibilities. Finally, after many trips to Germany, *Havana Night Club The Show* was introduced to Siegfried and Roy, who were friends of the show producer Nicole Durr. Although the agreement was made in 2003 to bring the company to Las Vegas, due to the unfortunate Siegfried and Roy tiger incident, the company did not come to The Stardust Casino Hotel until November 16, 2004.

In Las Vegas, Tara Foy, Dance Mistress for the Academy of Nevada Ballet Theatre, worked with the *Havana Night Club The Show*

dancers once they arrived. She was encouraging, supportive, and dynamic. Ray refers to her as an impactful mentor in the States. Her guidance was deeply appreciated; initially, he felt a bit lost relating to the country's new customs, climate change, and culture. Once the decision to stay was made, Ray expressed, "It was just getting used to the changes I had to make in my way of thinking. I would be a dancer, no matter what, but things were different. Not having family here took me longer [to adjust to] more than anything else. But overall, I knew it was an experience I had to go through. It was exciting and scary and all those things, all at once."

And then, there was the language! English is hard. He gave himself time, patience, and grace to learn.

After the show closed, the talented cast of dancers and musicians separated to find their way. Ray auditioned and worked in several Cirque de Soleil shows - *Zumanity*, *Lion King* (Mandalay Bay), and more. He traveled some, lived in Miami for a while, lived in New York for a time, and decided that Las Vegas was the place to live. Las Vegas was familiar in an unfamiliar country.

Back then, entertainers used the announcement section of a local notification paper. He saw an audition announcement on "Craig's List." It was for Arthur Murray Dance Studios ballroom and social dance instructors. He answered the solicitation, and, not



surprisingly, with his professional dance history, experience, and talent, Ray was hired to teach the Arthur Murray dance curricula. Once he knew what the organization was about, "I knew that this was what I wanted to do," he says with a smile.

Ray would be using the skills he had used all of his life. He had been a Havana dance professor and a Dance Master in *Havana Night Club The Show*, coaching the performers. He saw Arthur Murray as a way to help others enjoy dance, not just entertain people with his Dancing.

Ray discovered that his student roster was significantly growing through the Arthur Murray system. Also, in the competitive categories

Ray Guzman and Diane Bizarro competing at Arthur Murray Superama Ballroom Competition, Bellagio Hotel. Photo courtesy of Philyaw Phase Productions.

of professional/amateur ballroom dance, he groomed dancers who would repeatedly place high in the rankings, regardless of the level of dance or competitive dance styles.

When asked what he attributed this success to, his quick, passionate response was, "Caring! I care!" Then Ray explains that he does what he does from his heart. "For you to be good at what you do, you need to care about it! If you want to work at McDonald's, you need to care about it. I was raised with that discipline. If you have to sweep

the floor, you should care about that. Otherwise, you are doing it just because you have to do it. This is me! I care!"

With passionate care, Ray teaches his students based on their abilities, unique skill levels, and personal desires. After several years of successful and satisfying teaching, the desire to become an Arthur Murray franchisee took hold.

Ray has always been a believer in growth, in getting ready for "that next thing," the next move (dance reference- ha!). The combination of this characteristic with the many opportunities Arthur Murray offers to every person working with/for them who chooses to be a part of their organization logically translated to Ray. For him, the natural transition was to become a franchisee/owner of his studio. He recently accomplished this goal by opening the new Arthur Murray Centennial Dance Center in Las Vegas.

When asked what he would recommend to someone looking to expand and take the next step forward into their future, his elegant response was as fluid as he is on the dance floor. He says, "Prepare! Visualize yourself in that future. Prep yourself! Read, research, communicate, ask, prep! For me, that is the formula for everything. Opportunities are always going to present themselves. They will always come your way on your life's journey. If you are not ready for them, that is when you fail. Opportunity meets preparation. That's a success!"



In 2023, Ray visited home for the first time since he and his castmates defected. It had been almost 20 years since he could go back. "It felt great! I lost part of my family while I was gone, but seeing everyone was so good. Of course, I stayed in communication with my mom and immediate family over the years but had not been home. It felt fantastic seeing family and friends that I hadn't seen for such a very long time. From going back home, I learned that things are very different from what I remember. The culture of the country is the same, but different at the same time. When going to Cuba, you feel like you go back in time. We still have the cars from the 1950s, and some of the culture is very "old school." At the same time, you see people moving forward with technology. I was surprised to see people as advanced as they are, with such limited resources."

You might imagine, as a dancer, being still would relax him. However, quite the opposite is true. He likes to go to the gym to workout... when he can find the time.

His drive now is motivated by his desire to succeed at his studio.

*Arthur Murray Centennial, 7071 W. Craig Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89129
725.206.5161 - Photo by StephBVoices*

He feels a high level of responsibility for his staff's professional development and well-being. He joyfully welcomes, encourages, and trains his students. His desire and passion for success are supported by his family, both in his homeland of Cuba and his beautiful family, led by husband Ray Arzate, here in Las Vegas.

Without regret, he says he would not change any of his past. Now, he dreams and thinks in both English and Spanish. Little Ray Dancer is Ray Guzman of today because of the preparations made by his family; the never-ending determination, training, and focus he used while developing his talent; the choice he made at age 22 to risk everything; his mother's unwavering support and encouragement, allowing him the freedom to take risks, to choose to leave the familiar behind; the freedom to make mistakes.

Given permission to fail without question, Ray Guzman, with grace, is free to enjoy his pathway to success and spread his love of dance.

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DESIGNER: DAVID TUPAZ
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L.A. FASHION WEEK POWERED BY ART HEARTS FASHION DAVID TUPAZ FALL 2024-25

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

The only established fashion and couture designer in the entire State of Nevada, representing Las Vegas in every significant Fashion Week in the country, David Tupaz surprised the runway with a blast of colors for his Fall 2024-25 Boutique Collection during LA Fashion Week powered by Art Hearts Fashion.

The palette of vivid hues usually seen for Spring and Summer collections dominated the catwalk with models in fun ensembles of Fire Engine Reds, Canary Yellows, Fuchsias, and Emerald green, accessorized with bright

color-dyed faux furs and knitted gloves.

David explained, "Fall fashions usually bring the blacks, greys, browns, burgundy, camels to major runways worldwide...I wanted to change that basic and typical approach and make Fall alive with colors. Why not?"

And sure enough, the fashion audience agrees! Roaring applause greeted every model coming out, indicating that David's latest collection will indeed be the new trend for the Fall 2024-25 season!



LIQUID
STAR PHOTOGRAPHY

DESIGNER: DAVID TUPAZ
PHOTOGRAPHY: JAIME LIM



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THE JEREMIAH PROGRAM IN LAS VEGAS

Disrupting Generational Poverty

By Kendall Hardin
Photography courtesy of Jeremiah Program

We are bombarded with endless appeals for an infinite number of causes impacting the planet, like climate change, hunger, human trafficking, and poverty. But poverty is pervasive even in America. So, how do we turn it around in today's environment?

How exciting, then, that the Jeremiah Program (JP), one of the country's most proven models for attacking poverty head-on, has finally come to Las Vegas.

The program started 25 years ago in Minneapolis and has now spread to eight other cities, with Las Vegas and Baltimore joining the national nonprofit in 2022. The organization is lauded as one of the most successful models for disrupting the cycle of generational poverty by building economic mobility among single mothers and their children, two generations at a time.

"JP is a national thought leader on



Pam Carlston holds a Certificate of Congressional Recognition as Maria Tucker (center) awards the JP Las Vegas Champion for Change Award to Dr. Shartriya Collier on behalf of Nevada State University President DeRionne Pollard.

generational poverty and the systemic barriers facing single-parent families," cited Chastity Lord, President and CEO of the Jeremiah Program. "Our success lies in

our commitment to meeting the moment, addressing structured inequities, and supporting the leadership of women facing the issues of early childhood education,



The Las Vegas JP team headed by Executive Director Maria Tucker (far right).

college access, income inequality, and access to affordable housing.”

Over 27% of Nevada’s family households are headed by a single parent, and nearly one in every three single-mother families lives in poverty. Young single parents disproportionately come from Black and Latinx families who face structural barriers to accessing higher education, quality jobs, and economic mobility.

Research shows that achievement gaps between children in low-income households and those in higher-income households emerge in the earliest years of life, and these discrepancies widen as children grow older. So, how does JP upend this inevitable outcome?

A Universe of Support for JP Moms

The Jeremiah Program is built on the belief that five key pillars can disrupt poverty two generations at a time: 1) career-track college access and career support, 2) quality early childhood education, 3) empowerment and leadership training, 4) safe and affordable housing, and 5) a supportive community.

To become a JP Mom, a woman must participate in 12 weeks of Empowerment and Leadership Training, meeting weekly with her family coach to develop a plan. The process takes about six months to address all barriers

and find the balance each mom requires to proceed with the program.

While JP started as a residential model in the Midwest, the Las Vegas model provides a scalable “community hub” built on a constellation of public-private partnerships. In just two years, the Las Vegas model has partnered with Acelero, College of Southern Nevada, Nevada State University, Camino Verde Group, SCE Credit Union, and the Children’s Cabinet. The program is in early conversations with local workforce development programs.

Once a young single mother herself, Maria Tucker, armed with a Ph.D. in Environmental Sociology, joined the organization as the Las

Vegas chapter's first executive director two years ago. She assembled a start-up team comprised of a family services director and three coaches to qualify moms for the program and provide ongoing support for navigating the puzzle of researching and accessing all the critical resources facing today's women who are both single parents and college students.

"Single mothers entering college worry about when, not if, things will go wrong," explained Tucker. "Like dealing with low-wage job fluctuations, unstable housing, and unavailable child care. Cars that break down. Kids who get sick. And no family or professional connections to lend support and encouragement."

JP aims to guide and champion moms through today's complex support systems. The JP team functions as resource experts to connect moms to whatever they need. Non-residential campuses create a new kind of community, one that fosters the famous JP sisterhood among women helping other women.

The Creation of "Mompreneurs" at JP's First *Spark Tank*

"Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not," claimed Tucker, emcee of the closing event of the National JP Summit in Austin in 2023. Among the attendees were 200 JP moms and alumni gathered to celebrate the finalists of *Spark Tank*, JP's pitch

competition inspired by the famous *Shark Tank* television series.

The competition provides a chance for moms to present their ideas about a new business model that creates wealth for their families and produces genuine change in their communities. In the last two years, 82 moms signed up for *Spark Tank*, dedicating a day and a half with volunteer coaches to refine their pitches and present their ideas as effectively as possible.

Both motherhood and entrepreneurship can feel isolating and overwhelming. For participants, the feedback from their coaches and other moms proved invaluable. As Tucker underscored, "That's a key part of what *Spark Tank* was intended to do: build the community of JP mompreneurs through feedback and entrepreneurial idea sharing."

From all *Spark Tank* participants, coaches select finalists to present their pitches at the summit's closing dinner. A diverse panel of judges selects the top three winners, and the audience votes for their favorite choice, the winner of the Inspirational Entrepreneur Award.

Women Helping Women

Paying the Change Forward

Spark Tank challenges JP Moms to tackle local problems and fund businesses that uplift their communities. Each woman is judged on



her "ability to receive constructive feedback and present her idea in a way that showcases her passion, personality, and identity." Top winners receive cash prizes, which, in turn, leverage additional local funding and support.

Spark Tank winners inspire others with their resilience and creativity. Among the winning concepts:

- An affordable 24-hour child-care for mothers who work extended hours around the clock in Brooklyn.
- A mobile birth coaching and doula service to provide marginalized women in Boston who lack access to transportation with qualitative and affordable labor-and-delivery care.
- A dual-purpose "Fresh Start" juice bar in Austin that addresses community access to healthy food while providing



Twenty-three JP Vegas Moms attended the 2024 Summit in Baltimore.

equal-opportunity employment for women who have been incarcerated or convicted of felonies.

- A property company in Minneapolis that helps low-income families transition into home ownership by providing educational services to private property owners and tenants.
- A full-service beauty salon and school in Austin specializing in textured hair products and services to combat hair discrimination at work and school.
- A tailor-made operation in Baltimore to support families of those with developmental delays by providing resources to help reduce achievement

and opportunity gaps.

- A family enterprise that fabricates sustainable and organic handmade soaps inspired by one family's matriarchs in Brooklyn.

It is important to share all the ideas generated at *Spark Tank* so they can be replicated across the country to impact other families of 42 million Americans living in poverty. Innovation is empowering, electrifying, and contagious. That's the potential power of the JP Network in action.

Once a JP Mom, Always a JP Mom!

The Jeremiah Program now

operates in nine cities: Austin (TX), Baltimore (MD), Boston (MA), Brooklyn (NY), Fargo (ND)-Moorhead (MN), Las Vegas (NV), Minneapolis (MN), Rochester (MN), and St. Paul (MN). This year's JP Annual Summit and Spark Tank occurred in March, with 23 Vegas Moms attending this life-changing event in Baltimore.

In addition, the Jeremiah Program launched a new initiative during the 2020 pandemic - the JP Alumni Fellowship Program. Designed to expand leadership, the fellowship is a selective one-year commitment that enlists the talents and expertise of former JP moms as advisors and agents of social, political, and economic change.

The program is based on the premise that no one is more qualified to speak about the needs of single mothers experiencing poverty - and how the Jeremiah Program can best serve them - than JP moms. In its third year, the Alumni Leadership Program is hitting its stride with an outstanding cadre of accomplished JP alums.

JP's Las Vegas Office Opens Its Doors

The newly renovated Jeremiah Program Office officially opened in April at 730 Las Vegas Boulevard South. With input from JP participants, the facility includes a small playroom for children, a wellness space for moms, a board room, and a space for activities and community events.

From the original 14 moms in JP's first cohort in the fall of 2022, JP now serves over 200 moms and their children. A new group of initiates from its seventh cohort just joined this spring.

Creating a Ripple Effect for Positive Change

So what's the value or return of investment for educating women in America, where nearly one in four single mothers live in poverty?

According to the United Nations, educating a woman changes her destiny, as well as the destiny of her children, and ensures that she can contribute to the economic life of her country. Michelle Obama affirms that when women are

educated, their countries become stronger and more prosperous.

Educating women contributes vital (and sometimes unique) skills and knowledge to the workforce, driving more economic growth and innovation. And when women earn more, they uplift their families and contribute back to their communities.

As women complete their education and become leaders in various sectors, they inspire and mentor other women, creating a cycle of women giving back to women and paving the way for a more equitable future for everyone.

1,865 MOMS AND KIDS ENGAGED in JP's full suite of 2Gen program supports, including 696 moms enrolled or in the process of enrolling in two- or four-year degree programs and 26 college graduates.

368 NEW MOMS COMPLETED JP's introductory, three-month Empowerment and Leadership program, designed to move women from gratitude to agency and anchor them in their strengths.

10,000+ COACHING SESSIONS totaling almost 5,000 hours of college and career guidance and whole-family support.

82% OF MOMS reported that JP coaching is helping them progress toward their educational goals.

375 MOMS ENROLLED in college courses for the Spring and/or Fall 2023 semesters.

184 FAMILIES accessed safe, affordable housing on JP's five residential campuses, tapping into the power of intentional community spaces.

233 JP KIDS accessed exceptional birth-to-5 education in our five CDCs, setting the foundation for lifelong learning and success.

1,400+ HOURS of backup child care to support moms outside their providers' usual hours.

96% STAFFED in our CDCs by December 2023 — the highest staffing ratio we have achieved since the start of the pandemic.

22 JP MOMS AND TEACHERS enrolled in JP's ECE Fellowship, which provides full tuition coverage and a learning community for JP teachers and moms pursuing careers in ECE.

67% OF ELIGIBLE JP KIDS participated in summer enrichment opportunities (STEM camp, swim classes, martial arts, gymnastics, and more).

69 JP KIDS CONNECTED with professional tutors through our growing tutoring program, which offers ongoing assessment and customized learning to support school success.

60% OF ELIGIBLE FAMILIES participated in JP's 529 College Savings Program within its first full year of operation, making significant strides in their economic mobility journeys.

8 NEW MEMBERS JOINED the 2023-2024 JP Alumni Fellowship, a selective, 12-month leadership program that champions the collective power of sisterhood.

How to Tap into JP's Success Model

- Sign up for the Jeremiah Project newsletter. Receive monthly updates on JP moms, staff, and campuses in Las Vegas and nationwide. Sign up at jeremiahprogram.org.
- Join the JP Board of Directors. In addition to the National JP Board, the Las Vegas campus has a local Community Board of Trustees. How would you like to serve? Email mtucker@jeremiahprogram.org.
- Become a sponsor. The Las Vegas campus holds events throughout the year, not only to foster community among JP families but also to connect JP with the larger community. To partner with one of JP's community events, call (702) 623-1214.
- Volunteer. Among the many ways to volunteer with JP:
 - Sign up to volunteer at the new Las Vegas center in downtown Las Vegas.
 - Become a Career Volunteer Mentor to guide a JP mom professionally.
- Refer a mom. There are a number of ways to spread JP's offerings, but word of mouth remains a powerful avenue. If you know a mom who's ready to start or return to a post-secondary degree program, tell them about the Jeremiah Program.

“People should know that JP can give you hope in a place where it doesn't seem like there is hope — a future, an actual future.”

—JP LAS VEGAS MOM



205
MOMS AND KIDS engaged in JP's full 2Gen program supports, including 69 moms enrolled or in the process of enrolling in two- or four-year degree programs.

37
NEW MOMS completed JP's three-month Empowerment and Leadership program, with 97% opting to fully join JP Las Vegas.

750+
COACHING SESSIONS focused on college enrollment, career guidance, and whole-family support.

22
MOMS ENROLLED in college courses for the Spring and/or Fall 2023 semesters.



93%
OF MOMS reported that they feel like they belong in the JP community and that JP coaching is helping them progress toward their educational goals.

100+
HOURS of backup child care to support moms outside their providers' usual hours.



6
MOMS joined JP's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fellowship, which provides full tuition coverage and a learning community for moms pursuing careers in ECE.

77%
OF ELIGIBLE JP KIDS participated in summer enrichment opportunities (day camps, swim classes, martial arts, and more).

28
JP KIDS CONNECTED with professional tutors through our newly launched tutoring program, which offers ongoing assessment and customized learning to support school success.

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HIGHLIGHTS ONSTAGE AND BACKSTAGE AT THE OSCARS®

By Janet Susan R. Nepales



Ryan Gosling performs onstage during the live ABC telecast of the 96th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 10, 2024. Photo by Trae Patton.

“*B*arbie” may have been shut out of the Oscars, but Barbie’s Ken, Ryan Gosling, saved the show.

Dressed in glittery pink pants and suit ensemble, Gosling sang “I’m Just Ken” and performed with 62 other Kens onstage, including some of his cast mates - Simu Liu, Ncuti Gatwa, Kingsley Ben-Adir, and Scott Evans. Surprise guests at the performance were the producer and co-writer of the song, Mark Ronson, who played a pink guitar, Guns ‘N’ Roses guitar leg-

end Slash, and Wolfgang Van Halen of Mammoth WVH, who played rhythm guitar.

Another memorable appearance was a naked John Cena, who presented the Best Costume Design ironically. The “Suicide Squad” actor was wearing a nude-colored “modesty garment,” a piece of clothing used in film, TV, and theater productions to cover an actor’s private parts when he is supposed to appear naked.

Making the evening more interest-

ing was the presence of Messi, the seven-year-old border collie who appeared as the guide dog Snoop in the Oscar-nominated film, “Anatomy of a Fall.” At first, there were reports that Messi would be unable to attend the awards show after he had done most of the pre-Oscar events. But lo and behold, Messi came, wearing a black bowtie, and was seated, attending with his owner, Laura Martin. When not filming, Messi enjoys life in Paris, where he and his owner live.



Ryan Gosling performs onstage during the live ABC telecast of the 96th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 10, 2024. Photo by Richard Harbaugh / Phul McCarten.



Jimmy Kimmel and John Cena present the Oscar® for Costume Design during the live ABC telecast of the 96th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 10, 2024. Photos by Trae Patton.

Filipinos were also there to represent!

Fil-Am Vanessa Hudgens, who co-hosted again the Oscars red carpet pre-show with “Dancing with the Stars” host Julianne Hough, arrived in a black body-con turtleneck Vera Wang Couture gown that displayed her baby bump. In December, the former “High School Musical” star married baseball player Cole Tucker in an intimate ceremony in Mexico. Hudgens and Tucker are expecting their first child.

Fil-Am actress Hailee Steinfeld, 27, was a fashion goddess at the Oscars red carpet with her pastel blue ethereal Ellie Saab Couture gown, featuring a scarf and butterfly sleeves.

Steinfeld, whose film “Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse” was nominated for Best Animated Feature, arrived at the Oscars without her boyfriend, Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen.

Tia Carrere and Lou Diamond Phillips were also at the Oscars. Carrere, who will be appearing in the live feature of the animation “Lilo & Stitch,” hit the red carpet in a body-hugging, cleavage-showing nude gown with silver accents. Phillips, who arrived with his wife, Yvonne, also hit the red carpet and reunited with Carrere in the theater.

Nominated for his work as a cinematographer for the Bradley Cooper-helmed film “Maestro,” Director of Photography Matthew “Matty” Libatique arrived at the



Vanessa Hudgens arrives on the red carpet for the live ABC telecast of the 96th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 10, 2024.

Oscars wearing Filipino fashion designer Oliver Tolentino’s black brocade tuxedo. Tolentino has dressed Libatique in all of his three Oscar nominations for Best Cinematography (“Black Swan,” “A Star is Born,” “Maestro”).

Most of the Golden Globe winners – Christopher Nolan (Best Director), “Oppenheimer” (Best Film), Cillian Murphy (Best Actor),

Emma Stone (Best Actress), Robert Downey Jr. (Best Supporting Actor), Da’Vine Joy Randolph (Best Supporting Actress), Billie Eilish and Finneas O’Connell (Best Original Song), Ludwig Göransson (Best Original Score), The Boy and The Heron (Best Animated Feature), Justine Triet and Arthur Harari for “Anatomy of a Fall” (Best Screenplay) – all won again for the Oscars!



Hailee Steinfeld arrives on the red carpet for the live ABC telecast of the 96th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 10, 2024.



Matthew and Mary-Ellen Libatique at the live ABC telecast of the 96th Oscars® at the Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 10, 2024.



Finneas O'Connell and Billie Eilish, winners of the Best Original Song award for 'What Was I Made For?' from "Barbie", pose in the press room at the The 96th Academy Awards held by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, CA on Sunday, March 10, 2024. Photo by Sthanlee B. Mirador/Sipa USA



Robert Downey Jr., winner of Best Supporting Actor award for 'Oppenheimer' pose in the press room at the The 96th Academy Awards held by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, CA on Sunday, March 10, 2024. Photo by Sthanlee B. Mirador/Sipa USA



Emma Stone, winner of the Best Actress in a Leading Role award for "Poor Things" posing in the press room at the The 96th Academy Awards held by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, CA on Sunday, March 10, 2024. (Photo by Sthanlee B. Mirador/Sipa USA)

Emma Stone, who won Best Actress for her portrayal of Bella Baxter in "Poor Things," complained onstage about her broken zipper in her silk jacquard custom mint-colored Louis Vuitton gown and blamed it on the "I'm Just Ken" dancing.

"Oh, boy. My dress has broken. I think it happened during "I'm Just Ken." I'm pretty sure," she pointed out. We were reminded that

Stone is now a mother when she thanked her daughter and said, "And most importantly, my daughter, who is going to be three in three days, has turned our lives technicolor. I love you bigger than the whole sky, my girl. So, thank you so much."

Backstage, Stone admitted that she was shocked by her win since she expected Lily Gladstone of "Killers of the Flower Moon" to

win. Onstage, she announced, "I am sharing this award with you, Lily!"

Stone confessed to the media, "Oh, God. I think I blacked out. Yes, I was very shocked. I still feel like I'm spinning a little bit. So, yes, it's a huge honor, and I'm very surprised."

As for her dress, which malfunctioned, she assured us that everything was fixed. "Yes, they sewed me back in. Right when I came back, they sewed me back in, which was wonderful. I generally think I busted it during, 'I'm Just Ken.' I was so amazed by Ryan (Gosling) and what he was doing, and that number just blew my mind. And I was right there, and I just was going for it, and, you know, things happen."

By portraying Bella Baxter in "Poor Things," Stone revealed that she had learned a lot. "She is a character that is so, so important to me. I think the chance to play a person starting from scratch, but in a total metaphorical, can't-really-happen-in-real-life way, who's gaining language and skills at a rapid pace every day and getting to chart that course and realize that she was just full of joy and curiosity and true love, of not just the good, but the challenges in life and was fascinated by all of it, that was an amazing lesson to take with me and to try to get to live in the shoes of every day. So, I miss playing her ever since we wrapped filming a long time ago. It was like two and a half years ago. I miss Bella. And I'm grateful that we got to celebrate the film



tonight and over these past few months. And, yeah, I just love her.”

Cillian Murphy, who portrayed J. Robert Oppenheimer, the “Father of the Atomic Bomb” in Christopher Nolan’s award-winning film “Oppenheimer,” attended the Oscars with his wife, Yvonne McGuinness, and his two sons, Malachy, 17, and Aran, 16.

What he said in his acceptance speech was touching. “So, you know, we made a film about the man who created the atomic bomb. And for better or worse, we all live in Oppenheimer’s world. So, I would really like to dedicate this to the peacemakers everywhere.”

Murphy, the first Irish-born winner of the Best Actor award, told us backstage of his win, “I’m in a little bit of a daze. I’m very overwhelmed. I’m very humbled. I’m very grateful. I’m very proud to be

Irish standing here today.”

He added, “I think in Ireland, we’re great at supporting artists, and we need to continue supporting artists and the next generation of actors and directors. I think that is vitally important.”

Asked if he will be content being defined by “Oppenheimer,” the actor said, “Very content. You’ve got to move forward, but this has been a huge moment for me. The movie is so special to me. Chris Nolan and I have such a special relationship that I feel privileged to continue to work with him, and I’m very proud of it. This film is provocative, asks questions, and is challenging, but many people want to see it. So, I’m really proud of that.”

Murphy, who has also collaborated with Nolan on such films as “The Dark Knight” trilogy (2005-2012), “Inception” (2010), and

Christopher Nolan, Emma Thomas, and Charles Roven pose backstage with the Oscar® for Best Picture during the live ABC telecast of the 96th Oscars® at Dolby® Theatre at Ovation Hollywood on Sunday, March 10, 2024. Photo by Michael Baker.

“Dunkirk” (2017), admitted that reaching this point in his career with Nolan is very special. “It is very, very special. We have been working together for 20 years. I think he is the perfect director. He is an extraordinary writer and producer, and extraordinarily visually and as the director of actors, he presents this film as no one else does in the world. And I can’t just believe my luck.”

“I did a screen test for him as a kid, and I thought that would be it. It would be just enough to be in a room with Chris for a couple of hours, and here we are. So, I’m just so humbled and thankful.” We were very touched when Christopher Nolan, who won

Best Director for "Oppenheimer," said in his acceptance speech, "And to the Academy. Just to be able to say that movies are just a little bit over 100 years old. Imagine being there after 100 years of painting or theatre; we don't know where this incredible journey is going. But to know that you think I had a meaningful part of it means the world to me. Thank you very much."

Asked backstage what he thinks is the message of his film to the young people, Nolan replied, "I don't like to speak too specific

about messages of films I make because I feel that if cinema is didactic, it tends not to work dramatically so well. But it was very striking after finishing the film and seeing audiences respond to it. When I first embarked on the project, I told one of my teenage sons what I was working on, and he actually said to me young people aren't that concerned about nuclear weapons. It's not really in the forefront of their fears. And it seemed to me that this film could, to some extent, help its success, with many people seeing it."

"And as far as any kind of broader message, I would like to point out that the film ends on what I consider a dramatically necessary moment of despair, but in reality, I don't think despair is the answer to the nuclear question. If you look at the work on non-proliferation being done by individuals and organizations since 1945, there's been a reduction in the number of nuclear weapons on the planet since 1967 by almost 90 percent."

"In the last few years, it's gone the wrong way, and it's very im-



Christopher Nolan, winner of the Best Directing award and the Best Picture award for "Oppenheimer." Photo by Sthanlee B. Mirador/Sipa USA.

Robert Downey Jr., winner of Best Supporting Actor award for 'Oppenheimer.' Photo by Sthanlee B. Mirador/Sipa USA



Da'Vine Joy Randolph, winner of the Best Supporting Actress award for "The Holdovers" pose in the press room at the The 96th Academy Awards held by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, CA on Sunday, March 10, 2024. Photo by Sthanlee B. Mirador/Sipa USA.

portant that rather than despair, in reality, people are looking at advocacy; they're looking at organizations who are working to pressure politicians and leaders to reduce the number of nuclear weapons on our planet and make the world safer."

As for his most memorable moment in making the film, he shared, "I think for me, it was the first hair and makeup tests. There was something about see-

ing Cillian put that hat on, Robert Downey Jr. with his head shaved back, and Emily Blunt in old-age makeup. We did all that on the first test. We shot it on the first black-and-white IMAX film ever made, and we projected it on an IMAX screen over at the City Walk at Universal. That was a very special moment—to realize what the actors would do, and that the thing would work, and to see the technical side of things that cinematographer Hoyte (van

Hoytman) was bringing to the table with photography. It was remarkable, and that will always stay with me."

Da'Vine Joy Randolph, who won Best Supporting Actress for her role as the Barton Academy cafeteria manager Mary Lamb in "The Holdovers," said in her acceptance speech, "For so long, I've always wanted to be different, and now I realize I just need to be myself. And I thank you for seeing me."

Backstage with the press, Randolph emphasized that acting should not be about awards. "I think you'd be selling yourself short if you make it about the awards. It's too hard of a career. The beautiful and hard thing about being an actor is that it requires you to have resilience, self-confidence, and belief in yourself when no one else does when you constantly get 'nos' and say, 'Nope, I'm going to keep going.' So, actually, in many ways, while it can challenge your mental health, it also can strengthen it because you have to fortify yourself in a way that some people never have to do. So, for that, I'm grateful."

"I would also say keep yourself grounded, surrounded by people who care and love you, and stay close to what's real. And, again, I'm just very adamant that it would not be in your heart if you weren't meant to do it. And I know it can be challenging to wait that wait, but when it happens, it's a full circle moment, and you know it was worth it."

Billie Eilish, 22, and her brother Finneas O'Connell, 26, won Best Original Song for their composition of the "Barbie" song, "What Was I Made For?" They also made history by being the youngest and second youngest to win a second Oscar.

Eilish, who thanked her teachers in music and even one teacher who didn't like her "but you were good at what you did," was asked backstage by the press what she would say right now to a young person dreaming of a life in music.

She answered, "I would say, 'Don't do it for other people. Don't do it for numbers. Or fame. I want everyone to be doing something they feel passionate about and proud of, making them feel like the best version of themselves. I remember being 12, believe it or not, and seeing this musical and sobbing my eyes out because I was like, damn, I'm a failure, and I'm not going to have a career. I was watching 'Matilda' on Broadway, which was amazing. I bawled in the back nosebleeds and said, 'I'm never going to amount to anything because I'm not in 'Matilda.' I would say give yourself some time and do what you love. And I know that's easier said than done because some of us don't even know what we love. But you will figure it out. You will find it.'"

Jimmy Kimmel hosts the live ABC telecast of the 96th Oscars®. Photo by Trae Patton.





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RYAN DUSICK FINDS IT NO LONGER HARDER TO BREATHE

By Sheryl Aronson

For most musicians, attaining two Grammys and having their band's album hit platinum would signify the top milestone in one's life. Not so for Ryan Dusick, the original drummer of Maroon 5.

"Receiving my master's degree from Pepperdine in clinical psychology a few years ago and getting a bachelor's from UCLA are the accomplishments that I'm most proud of... and writing my book, *Harder to Breathe*."

Although Ryan was one of the founding members of the mega group Maroon 5 and lived the luminous life of a rock star, by 2004, he suffered a chronic nerve injury that brought his career to an abrupt impasse. The terrible irony of attaining the dream of superstardom success was the exact moment fate forced him to step away – thrusting Dusick onto a painful journey of self-discovery.

He recalls the moment Maroon 5 had won Best New Artist at the 47th Grammy's in 2005 as a surreal experience.



Photo by Sherman Alford (Sasaphotos.com)



"Everything had escalated to the highest level in terms of success just as I was crashing. We walked down toward the stage and hugged Kanye West—also nominated for Best New Artist—before going up. However, inside, I was suffering, so it was a weird juxtaposition between the highest high and the lowest low."

Two decades after *Songs About Jane* (the platinum album in which Maroon 5 won several accolades in the music industry), Ryan Dusick penned a memoir *Harder to Breathe/A Memoir of Making Maroon 5 and Finding Recovery*. The book reveals the story behind Maroon 5's path to celebrity, the harsh demands and struggles the band endured to succeed, Dusick's departure from the band due to a chronic nerve injury that caused his inability to play the drums, which was followed by his battle with anxiety and addiction,

and finally pursuing a career in the mental health field.

Now working as a mental health professional at The Missing Peace Center for Anxiety in Agoura Hills, CA, Ryan Dusick is an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist and a life coach, speaking publicly about mental health in the music industry.

"It's a unique intersection for me having been in the limelight and having gone through the experience of being an artist and an entertainer, and then having expertise in education and mental health," he claims. All those experiences combined in a way that gave him more relevance and purpose.

The evolution of Ryan's rise as a rock star to the demise of his career - as he entered years of painful struggle with addiction - redefined his purpose in life as

well as the courage to recreate his identity. Ryan's memoir *Harder to Breathe* is an inspiring tale with many meanings.

"When I was a teenager, my first experience with anxiety - long before I even knew that it was called anxiety - began with a lump in my throat. I felt disconnected from my surroundings, and I remember focusing on this feeling, which made it harder for me to breathe. I'd feel lightheaded because I wasn't breathing enough. Then I'd stop breathing for a minute and didn't understand what was wrong. I felt I was the only person who had this problem, and it was very isolating. The title of my memoir related to that experience, but of course, the song *Harder to Breathe* was the hit single that we promoted for a year on the road, leading to Maroon 5's big success."

Interestingly, I only knew Ryan



Photo by Sherman Alford (Sasaphotos.com)

Dusick on the softball field every Sunday for seven years, as we both played a pickup game with the Beverly Hills Morning Softball group. My impression of Ryan was a soft-spoken, super-talented ball player with admirable athletic skills. Over time, I discovered he was studying psychology at Pepperdine University to become a therapist. I had often wondered what he had done professionally before that because, at the time, he was already in his 40s. Then, a few years ago, I overheard Ryan was writing a book and thought it was probably a psychology self-help book. Finally, in 2022, Ryan announced that his book had been published. I decided to google Ryan Dusick, and to my surprise, I discovered he was the original drummer of Maroon 5! On the softball field, no one ever discussed their professions. We just played ball.

As a music journalist and a Licensed Marriage Family Therapist, I was thrilled to sit down with Ryan Dusick to talk about his memoir, the history behind Maroon 5, and, most importantly, the dissolution of his identity that led to the terrifying fall into nothingness – then achieving the vulnerability and humbleness to strive once again, but this time to serve others.

Chic Compass: Ryan Dusick, Grammy-winning artist, former drummer with Maroon 5, psychotherapist, and now author of *Harder to Breathe* ... let's talk about the beginnings of your music career and how you met Adam Levine and the other members of Maroon 5.

Ryan Dusick: I grew up in LA in the 80s, and my family was musical. My dad's sister, Michelle Lee,

became a Broadway star, and my dad sang harmonies with her when they were kids. My mom's family from Mexico played a lot of music. My grandfather played the mandolin and the fiddle; my uncles played guitar and jazz drums. Music was in my blood. I started playing the drums when I was 12, and my older brother Josh played the electric guitar. Classic Rock bands like Led Zepelin, Cream, and Jimi Hendrix inspired us. I joined my brother's first band, and at the age of 14/15, we played on the Sunset Strip at Whiskey-A-Go-Go, The Roxy, and the Troubadour.

Chic Compass: How did you meet Adam Levine?

Ryan Dusick: Adam was a family friend but was a year and a half younger than me and two grades behind me in school. (Ryan laughs)

Adam was like an annoying little brother, very rambunctious and scattered; I, on the other hand, was controlled and serious. We started a band when I was 12 but never played anywhere; we never recorded a song; we just rehearsed in my parents' garage. But that fizzled out. A few years later, when we were both at Brentwood High School, I was looking for new people to form a band. I didn't realize Adam could sing. I knew he played rhythm guitar. Suddenly, when I was in 11th grade and he was in 9th grade, I heard him singing and realized he had a unique voice. One of the most essential qualities of a band's success is the distinctive sound of the lead singer's voice. It doesn't matter how many good musicians you have playing; the voice must stand out.

Chic Compass: What was your evolution for playing the drums?

Ryan Dusick: I'd tried a couple of different instruments before choosing the drums. My brother and I took piano lessons, and I played the violin for a couple of years in the school orchestra. I was terrible at both. Funny enough, at that time, my dad had thought that the music gene would skip my generation because I wasn't proficient at either of those instruments. However, when my brother started playing electric guitar, and it was rock'n'roll and a lot of fun ... I felt free, and music was a release for my emotions. Playing the drums was a catharsis and a way of releasing angst. Entering adolescence, I had feelings I didn't understand. I was

an athlete, so I played baseball, and I was coordinated, so drums made sense to me since it was very physical.

Chic Compass: The band you originally began with Adam Levine, Jesse Carmichael, and Mickey Madden, was under the name Kara's Flowers. You were signed by record label Reprise Records and released an album called 'The Fourth World' in 1997.

Ryan Dusick: In the early 90s, during the grunge era, we started what became Maroon 5. We were called Kara's Flowers. The members were obsessed with bands like Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Sound Garden, and Alice in Chains. Those alternative rock bands of the early 90s were driven by dark, brooding, and heavy music. But over a decade, we evolved our sound and grew from teenagers to Maroon 5.

When we started the band, I was the older guy who had been in a band before and had experience, so what the sound was going to be was my idea: heavy, riffy kind of music, and Adam would sing pretty melodies on top. He and Jesse improved their songwriting skills within a couple of years. For Adam, writing lyrics took the longest as he matured as an artist.

In the 90s, you could get away with lyrics that didn't mean much or at least sounded like they meant something. Adam was a good imitator, and he would listen to a lot of grunge music and come up with words and phrases that sounded poetic but had no real meaning beneath. He was precocious in terms of finding words and phrases that sounded good in a song, but at the same

Maroon 5's Ryan Dusick, Adam Levine, Jamie Valentine, Jesse Carmichael, and Mickey Madden. Photo by Christopher Wray-McCann



time, it took him some time to figure out what he wanted to say as a songwriter. That happened later in the Maroon 5 era of the band.

Chic Compass: How did the band evolve? I know it wasn't an overnight success. It took ten years before the big break happened.

Ryan Dusick: We always had a special chemistry and natural talent in the band, even though we were very inexperienced in the beginning. Between '94, when we started the band, and '97, when we made our first album as Kara's Flowers, we were signed to a record deal with Reprise at Warner Brothers. At that time, we went from grunge to pop/melodic sounds influenced by our love of The Beatles and the Mod 60s British. We were also influenced by the bands Weezer and Green Day, which had a hard-driving guitar-pop sound. There was a natural transition from the sludgy, dark, heavy stuff to a more pop sound, still guitar-driven.

The record label and everyone thought we would be big stars, but it didn't work out that way, and we flopped. The band had to return to the drawing board and figure out if we wanted to continue. The record label then released us from our contract.

In '98, it was a weird transitional moment, and we almost broke up. Adam and Jesse went to New York for a semester at a music school; I went back to UCLA, as did Mickey and the band's future

was on hold. As fate would have it, when Adam and Jesse came back to LA, we were all listening to the same music, and the influences now were more groove-based R&B, hip-hop, and classic soul. At the time, we thought there was no way we could incorporate a Timberland beat into our music, which seemed too audacious, so we were just toying around with more of a vintage RB kind of sound as much as any four white kids from Brentwood. I think there was enough glossiness in how we played, and Jesse was practicing and learning a lot about jazz and classical compositions.

There was a moment in one rehearsal when we said why don't we try to emulate a hip-hop track and go for it! I started playing the beat, which was my impression of a Timberland program but on an actual drum set, and Jesse started playing a keyboard part that was funky, cool, in a hip-

hop/R&B kind of way. Then we wrote a melody on top of it, and in 20-30 minutes, we had the song "Not Coming Home."

The song had a slow-paced kind of hip-hop groove but played like a rock band with guitars and drums playing. The light bulb went on - this is different from anything we've ever done, and that was the beginning of creating the distinct future Maroon 5 sound.

Chic Compass: What is interesting about that moment is that not only was a historic musical moment being made, but the group had to let go of any preconceived ideas of what Kara's Flowers had been before - changing directions and not holding on tightly, which opened a magical moment, so something shifted. As psychotherapists, we also know that's how change happens.

Ryan Dusick: Growth only hap-



pens in discomfort. As artists, you must venture out of what is safe and comfortable to break new ground.

The new ground ended up being *Songs About Jane*, and we brought James Valentine to play lead guitar. The band scored a new deal with Octone Records under the new name and sound, releasing *Songs About Jane* in 2002.

Chic Compass: Despite the huge success of this album in 2005, it took two years of a hard, grinding tour for the band.

Ryan Dusick: The album *Songs About Jane* came out in 2002, but we were eight years into being a band by then. From 2002 to 2003, we drove around the country and promoted our first single, “*Harder to Breathe*,” but it took another two years for the record to blow up!

We played over 500 shows. We did “meet and greets,” fan club shows, and in-store and radio station appearances. We were constantly traveling, and it was exhausting and exhilarating,

Then, in 2004, the single “*This Love*” came out, and that’s when the album blew up internationally, and we had a platinum record. However, it was ten years into us being a band when the world learned about Maroon 5 in a big way.

Chic Compass: From the outside, everybody thinks what



a glamorous and exciting life you’re having as a rock star, but the public doesn’t realize how hard the artists are working and may be suffering too. You had been quietly dealing with painful nerve damage at this time, which affected your drumming.

Ryan Dusick: I had an old injury in my shoulder caused by pitching in high school baseball. The injury had never affected my drumming, but it became an issue around 2003. Looking back, I realize other things were going on that were mental health issues, but I didn’t have the vocabulary to talk about my mental state. I felt like there was something defective about me. I was very perfectionistic and hard on myself.

I was becoming very obsessive-compulsive about the drums themselves and about my performance. I never had stage fright, but I had a lot of adrenaline pumping through me and thoughts about making sure I did

*Ryan Dusick performing with Maroon 5.
Photo by Christopher Wray-McCann*

everything just right. I didn’t want to mess up when we played on live TV in front of millions of people. Having a physical problem coupled with a psychological upset weighed heavily on me. Over time, while touring overseas, jet lag became an issue, and my entire constitution started to break down. My coordination on the drums was affected, and I felt increasingly exhausted. I kept thinking we’d get a break, but the album kept building momentum, and we traveled worldwide.

I was in my mid-20s at the time. I wish that I’d had more emotional maturity and the ability to be vulnerable. My answer was to try harder, bear down, grin and bear it. I had no other option because we were in the middle of a global campaign for world domination with this album.

I was hurting and needed to take time off, but we had five guys in

the band, a whole crew, a management team, a record label, agents, managers, and millions of dollars on the line. At that point, it was not an option not to play, and I knew I'd keep playing until I couldn't play anymore.

Chic Compass: How were the other band members reacting to you then? Did they notice something was wrong?

Ryan Dusick: I wasn't playing things as well as I used to, and I was missing a beat now and then. They would bring those things to my attention, but we

were two years into touring. I would hear comments like, "You just missed the drum beat there, or "The kick drum sounds inconsistent," and then they asked, "What's going on?"

No one understood what was going on inside of me because I wasn't talking about my problems. I was doing the opposite and focusing too much to get it just perfect. Finally, it got to the point where it affected my drumming, and the band told me to go home and figure out the problem no matter how long it took. I felt defeated.

I went to an orthopedist, and he told me I had chronic tendonitis in my shoulder and a lot of inflammation. I felt something bigger going on there, something more global regarding feeling defective.

Chic Compass: You began drinking more heavily at this time.

Ryan Dusick: I had a doctor who told me I needed to chill out and have a few cocktails. It was the first time in my life I used drinking to self-medicate, and at the same time, there were doctors prescribing medications, too. The combination with alcohol made things a lot worse.

I tried to come back and play the drums, but I would take three steps forward and then three steps back... that was the beginning of what became my fall into alcoholism. I'd been living the high life, the life I always dreamt of when I was aspiring to be a pop star. I had amazing experiences, not just with celebrities but also with my musical heroes—jamming with Stevie Wonder and Prince. The most difficult challenge was walking away from the brotherhood of the band. I'd been in this band for over a decade. They were my brothers. There was a camaraderie, and my entire social sphere was centered around the band. That was my identity, life's meaning, and sense of purpose. To walk away was devastating.



Ryan Dusick in his home studio. Photo by Sherman Alford (Sasaphotos.com)



Chic Compass: This was the turning point when you dived deeper into alcoholism. You're now back in LA, trying to fix your physical and mental stress.

Ryan Dusick: I had fallen off a cliff, and I started drinking heavily. I was very depressed, and my family and friends noticed that I was struggling. On a few occasions, family and friends told me, 'We're worried ... we see you're drowning.' I didn't want to be that guy who people were worried about. I made a very concerted effort to get myself together, which was another phase of alcoholism.

I was able to show up to family events and look like I had it together, and I was able to abstain from drinking for a time. Finally, this lifestyle was unmanageable, and I became powerless over

this addiction. When I came to that realization, I had a moment of humility.

Chic Compass: You finally checked yourself into the Betty Ford rehabilitation center.

Ryan Dusick: After a couple of weeks into recovery, I realized there were guys with only a few weeks of sobriety helping others who had entered the program. Then, after a couple of weeks, I helped the new guys. I was bringing them in, and I showed them around. I told them what I'd learned, and then it hit me... I felt a purpose and meaning to my life emerge. I was now being of service to someone else. This act got me out of my self-obsession and low self-esteem, which was the result of everything I'd lost. For the first time, I had something else to offer besides being the drummer in Maroon 5.

*Sheryl Aronson interviews Ryan Dusick.
Photo by Sherman Alford (Sasaphotos.com)*

Chic Compass: A mighty fall from grace – reaching the highest milestone in a musician's career – then beginning again at ground zero. When people can go inside themselves and find self-worth and meaning without the external trimmings of life, resiliency and power emerge.

Ryan Dusick: It was the beginning of a long journey. In the last 7 ½ years, I have volunteered at a recovery Center, telling my story and advising people about early recovery. From there, I decided to get a master's degree in clinical psychology and become a therapist. I'd forgotten that I was intelligent, empathetic, sensitive, and could be present with other human beings and connect with them in a meaningful way.

When you're mired in addiction, depression, and grief, it's hard to remember anything good about yourself. I had a spiritual awakening, as cliché as that sounds ...but it's true. I've been seeing clients for two years now as an associate marriage and family therapist.

Chic Compass: What was the process of writing your Memoir, *Harder to Breathe*?

Ryan Dusick: I wrote the book as a result of writing self-reflection papers in graduate school. I used to love writing, but I hadn't done it in years because anytime I tried it during my addiction years, my perfectionism got in the way. I had to finish writing and turn the papers in, which gave me more confidence and led to my writing the book.

I realized my story had a happy ending, and by telling it - a purpose emerged - to help others find hope when struggling with personal demons.

I loved the idea of rescripting the story of my life. We tell ourselves new stories about our shortcomings, how things went down because of who we are or what was wrong with us, and when we can look back on it and find lessons and meaning, that's empowering.

Writing this book was the ultimate closure I needed, so as I went into writing the second draft, I

*Ryan Dusick performs with Maroon 5.
Photos by Christopher Wray-McCann*



realized it was time to go deep and be as honest and vulnerable. I was writing about the early fun stuff when the band was forming, going back to that place of being 16 years old again, driving the band around in my Jeep Wagoneer. I was sitting in that emotional place and remembering what it felt like—all the teenage absurdity—and I got to the dark, dark times. I saw a lot of connections between my teenage years and the time of my downfall. I had to sit in those moments when I was really struggling and suffering and own them. Writing then became heavy because I was reliving all the pain.

However, I realized in my new journey that I felt inspired and hopeful. If I had that experience while writing, the reader could have a similar experience.

Chic Compass: Your book has been out since November 2022. Let's talk about its success. What's been happening with book tours, podcast interviews, and other promotions?

Ryan Dusick: It's been an interesting journey with the book's release; I didn't anticipate it. I hadn't set out to become a speaker by trade, but I was offered opportunities to speak not just about the book but as an advocate for mental health. Doing this has become important because I now can be a voice

Ryan Dusick holds his book, Harder to Breathe / A Memoir of Making Maroon 5 and Finding Recovery in his home studio. Photo courtesy of Ryan Dusick

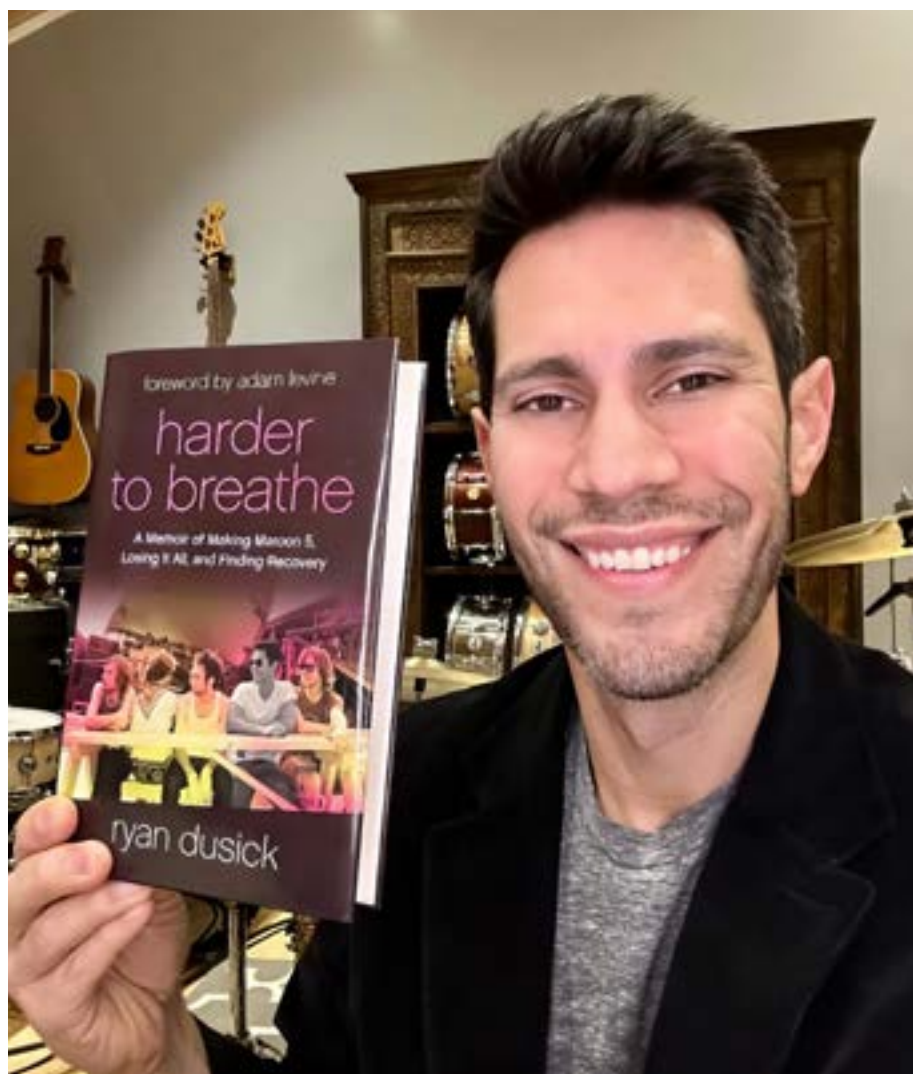
in the conversation, advocating and destigmatizing seeking help for mental health. We need more models for male vulnerability, so speaking has become my new passion. I don't know the next steps, whether it be a podcast or another book.

Chic Compass: You're also speaking to the musicians about mental health.

Ryan Dusick: I didn't set out to become a therapist or coach within the music industry. When I wrote the book, I should have anticipated it would bring me back into that world. I've had many

people reaching out to me and suggesting that I should be working specifically with musicians or performers. I think even if I'm geared toward that demographic, all people experience stress and performance anxiety in their daily lives. I feel anyone can relate to my story, whether they're the biggest star in the world or not. Sometime in our lives, we all find it harder to breathe.

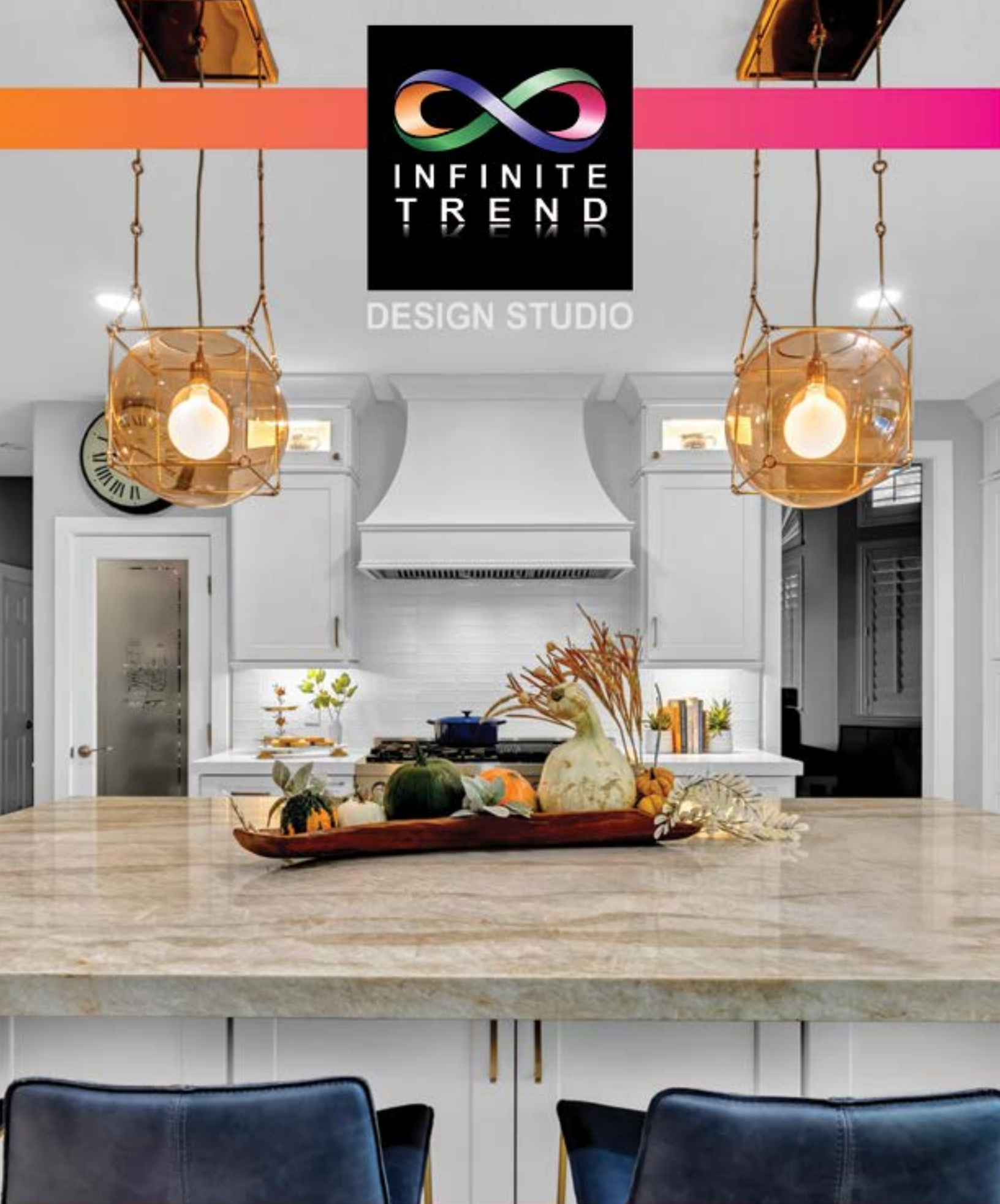
Harder to Breathe/A Memoir of Making Maroon 5 and Finding Recovery is available at Amazon.com, benbellabooks.com, and BarnesandNoble.com.





INFINITE
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DESIGN STUDIO



MIDNIGHT MUSE LAS VEGAS

THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

By Joan S. Peck

How powerful are words? Just ask Ann Parenti! “When Debra Russell asked me one simple question in a meeting in November 2012, my original idea of what I wanted to do began to explode!”

If you know Ann, you can easily understand that nothing is impossible. She seems to have no limit to what she can accomplish ... even conducting a seminar series called Possibilities. So began *Midnight Muse* – The Book, The Music, and The Film under the Forgotten Song Music publication company she formed a few years before. It is an outstanding achievement that pays tribute to the musicians behind the headlines who made Las Vegas a mecca for entertainers to perform 24/7. It also acknowledges some of the city’s artists and poets.

Where did the idea come from? It all began when Ann considered creating an album with several of her favorite jazz and R&B musi-



cians in Las Vegas to perform on. She planned on writing a few songs for the album and personally singing some standards for it. She also envisioned a little spiral ring book filled with art and poetry from several friends to make it a companion set.

“I had it all planned in my mind. Then, I met Debra, who asked me why I was not documenting the project on film since I would be using some of the best of the best in jazz in Las Vegas, who would likely have great stories to tell. A light bulb went on that this would



be something much bigger than I had imagined.”

Debra also suggested that Ann press the music onto an LP instead of a CD that day. Remember, LPs in 2012 were not all that popular at the time. Ann thought that was a bit of a stretch and went the CD route instead.

Ann is a believer in messages and promptings from the Universe. She asked for signs while deciding if she should pursue that idea. Two days after that meeting, Ann walked into a recycling store and stumbled upon a spiral binder like the one she had imagined. “However, it had one unusual feature

... it was a recycled LP. I contacted the vendor who had created the actual recycled LPs, and I purchased the LPs as the cover for my book. Then I asked several of my friends in the music industry if they would be interested in doing the project with me, and they all said yes!”

And Ann was off and running! Ironically, Ann sang only one song on the 2 CD set but wrote and co-wrote several songs to fit into the sound from those eras in which the songs would have been originally performed.

“I approached the local jazz society called Las Vegas Jazz

Above (L-R): Mary Marles, Jake Naylor, Ann Parenti, Joan Peck

Society. With the help of Patrick and Cynthia Gaffey, Dan Skea, Judy Tarte, and Carolyn Freeman and the entire board of directors and my book team, which included Joan Peck, Jake Naylor, and Mary Marles, we located and compiled photos and documented history of the early days of the jazz society in Las Vegas.”

It took just one year to complete the three-part *Midnight Muse*—a phenomenal feat. “It was because everyone worked together to honor the musicians who were the backbone of musical support for headliners performing on The

Strip. Las Vegas was where many musicians had two or more gigs each day, running from one casino or place to another, ending their day in time for breakfast for a few bucks at various restaurants. We all wanted to thank them for their efforts to make Las Vegas the mecca it was for musicians—the entertainment capital of the world.”

The Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss

Ann’s friends David Tupaz and Carolyn Freeman asked her to help the two of them apply for the Las Vegas Centennial grant for what the three planned on doing collectively called the Viva Awards. The grant was specifically for projects that had a historical value to Las Vegas, and *Midnight*

Muse qualified for that aspect of the grant but not the trio’s idea. Therefore, things got slightly complicated, and Ann had to return to ask for the grant alone. However, to be considered, she had to become a 501c3.

From that Forgotten Song Foundation was born, a sister to Forgotten Song Music. The foundation applied for and received two Las Vegas Centennial grants, which allowed the CD’s reproduction, the book’s reprint, and the licensing and approvals needed for *Midnight Muse* to be accepted and shown on PBS. Producer Philip Norbert, one of the film’s producers, was instrumental in securing this. David Berry was the other film producer who traveled from Hawaii to film the movie. Dave is the reason it is on Amazon Prime to this day. The foundation will be

celebrating its 10th anniversary in March 2024 and has given out well over \$100K in scholarships and grants over the years.

The trilogy of *Midnight Muse* gives the reader/viewer/listener an idea of what Las Vegas was like in its heyday with Sinatra, Joe Williams, Count Basie, and so many others listed in the collection. Like many things in life, in time, things circle, and we now have a growing rebirth of jazz clubs popping up all over Las Vegas.

When I asked Ann for a one-word response about that time of producing *Midnight Muse*, she immediately answered ... “exhausting.” (laugh)

“I will speak for all of us involved in creating *Midnight Muse*; it was our pleasure to honor those wonderfully gifted musicians who helped to make beautiful music that lifted our hearts in the past and continues to do so today.”

Midnight Muse will celebrate its 10th anniversary at Notoriety this May. Forgotten Song Foundation, JOI (Jazz Outreach Initiative), and Chic Compass will be there to help celebrate the night. Ironically, March 2014 was when it all began, and the film’s original release was just two blocks away at the Inspire Theatre.

Fast forward to today, and jazz is again alive and well in Las Vegas!

Left: Carolyn Freeman in the recording studio



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RESTAURANT OWNERSHIP IS NOT FOR EVERYONE

By Joseph Amato

My direct involvement in developing hundreds of restaurants in the last twenty-five years and the background and history of each of those projects have left an amazing legacy of culinary excellence throughout the U.S. that leaves me breathless at times.

Initially, I became involved in the restaurant industry in the late 1980s in the New York City area. Soon after, I fell in love with the varied mechanisms surrounding the restaurant industry—especially food preparation. Enough so that I was trained at a well-regarded culinary school to learn all I could about commercial food preparation. I have used these skills to develop several food offerings in

the casual dining industry and a full-service Italian restaurant.

When I decided to become a full-time business consultant in the Washington, D.C. area in the 1990s, I realized that my years of experience in the restaurant industry allowed me the opportunity to become a valuable asset to potential restaurant clients with the ability to support their dreams in establishing their own restaurant concept.

One of the first restaurant projects I worked on as a consultant involved a small business owner in Loudon County, Virginia, who sought to start a unique restaurant concept in his neighborhood. I was able to assist him in

successfully launching the restaurant. We recently ran into each other at the World Pizza Convention in Las Vegas this past week. In our discussions, he informed me that his initial restaurant concept had been modified substantially into a new food concept and had now grown to six locations throughout the Washington, D.C. area.

Twenty-five years later, my latest restaurant project included expanding an extremely well-known restaurant operation in the Arts District of Las Vegas. We assisted the restaurant owner with moving to a new adjacent location, purchasing their building, and tripling the seating capacity while expanding its already successful

and highly regarded Italian-fusion-based menu. Coincidentally, we are currently working on expanding another successful restaurant operation on Spring Mountain Road, Las Vegas, into a new restaurant concept at The Bend, and another restaurant group is looking to launch a new Mexican-fusion restaurant project in the Centennial area of Las Vegas.

With my previous restaurant experience, I understood that the complex process involved in seeking to start or expand any restaurant business could be highly intense and demanding. Successful restaurant ownership requires a unique blend of personal characteristics, culinary skills, and entrepreneurial qualities due to the dynamic and demanding nature of the hospitality industry. Some of the essential characteristics for a restaurant owner include many of the following aspects to ensure potential business success.

To be a successful restaurant, the owner must have an absolute passion for food and hospitality, including a genuine love for food, cooking, and exceptional guest experiences. This passion drives innovation, quality, and the perseverance needed to overcome the everyday challenges of restaurant ownership.

Additionally, having business management experience, including understanding financial oversight and budgeting, marketing, and operational control, is crucial for a successful restaurant owner. An owner needs to make informed

decisions that balance culinary creativity with the profitability and efficiency of the business operation. Effective leadership that inspires and motivates staff fosters a positive work environment and ensures the highest levels of service. Managing a culinary team also involves conflict resolution, training, and personnel management, requiring strong interpersonal and communication skills.

A sincere focus on customer satisfaction is essential to nurture repeat business and positive word-of-mouth effectively. This means not only meeting but exceeding customer expectations, handling complaints gracefully, and creating a welcoming atmosphere. The restaurant business is known for its high-pressure situations and unpredictability. The ability to remain calm under pressure, bounce back from setbacks, and manage stress is critical for personal well-being and business success.

That was especially evident during the COVID pandemic, that took a massive toll on restaurant operations nationally. The pandemic's impact on the restaurant industry was significant, with many establishments facing challenges such as lockdowns, reduced capacity, and changes in consumer behavior. According to the National Restaurant Association in the United States, it was estimated that more than 110,000 eating and drinking places were closed temporarily or did not reopen at all. This number reflects the severity of the pandemic's impact during its early and middle stages. It's

important to note that the situation has evolved, and many regions have seen a recovery phase with restaurants reopening or new ones starting. Globally, the situation varied significantly from one country to another, depending on government response, the severity of COVID-19 outbreaks, and the financial support available to businesses. In some areas, robust government aid helped keep many restaurants afloat, while in others, the lack of support led to higher closure rates.

It's also worth mentioning that the pandemic spurred innovation within the industry, leading to an increase in delivery and takeout services, outdoor dining expansions, and other adjustments to business models to cater to new consumer preferences and safety guidelines.

Other necessary elements, including quality control in food presentation, cleanliness, service, and all other aspects of the restaurant experience, are vital. Attention to detail can make the difference between a good and an unforgettable dining experience.

Therefore, understanding market trends, customer preferences, and external factors like economic shifts or government-influenced health crises can change rapidly. Being able to pivot, adapt to new realities, and innovate is key to staying relevant and successful. Having a clear vision for the restaurant and the creativity to bring it to life in unique ways can set a restaurant apart in a competitive market. That includes

menu innovation, marketing strategies, and creating a distinctive dining environment. Balancing these characteristics can be challenging, but those who do it well find restaurant ownership rewarding. Beyond individual traits, success also depends on building a solid team that shares your vision and dedication to excellence.

In the United States, the restaurant industry includes over 749,000 active operations, and they are as diverse as you can imagine, encompassing a wide range of types, each catering to different customer preferences, dining experiences, and price points. So, a prospective restaurant owner can select one of the many existing restaurant types that have prospered in the U.S. economy. Fast Food Restaurants are the most prevalent throughout the U.S. and are known for their intense marketing campaigns, quick service, and convenience, mainly offering items like burgers and fries. Fast Casual includes a blend of fast food and casual dining, offering higher quality food in a more upscale environment. Fine Dining will always be identified as a restaurant with exceptional food, service, and ambiance. Casual Dining Restaurants offer a relaxed atmosphere with moderately priced food and table service. Ghost Restaurants are a newer trend that exploded during COVID-19 and exclusively provide food offerings through online orders and deliveries without a physical dining space. Cafes and Coffee Shops usually focus on coffee and light meals, often acting as social hubs. Buffet-style



Restaurants are a mainstay of the elderly population and resorts and offer a wide selection of food at a fixed price with self-service.

As prevalent as Fast Food Restaurants may be, the U.S. also has its fair share of Bars and Pubs in every community throughout the U.S. that primarily serve alcoholic beverages but often offer comfort foods. Bistro Restaurants are usually small, casual restaurants serving simple meals in a modest setting. Pizzerias are very close to my heart and not only specialize

in pizza but may also offer pasta, salads, and sandwiches. Diners are usually a small community staple and provide all levels of American comfort food and their distinctive, retro aesthetics. Food Trucks usually serve metropolitan/urban/business areas and late-night revelers, serving food from customized trucks with complete service kitchens. Pop-up Restaurants became a phenomenon in the 2000s as temporary restaurant concepts operating for a limited time to test new food ideas or offer unique dining experiences.

Each type of restaurant caters to different dining preferences, from quick and casual meals to luxurious dining experiences. The choice of restaurant type depends on various factors, including target market, budget, and culinary concept. The restaurant industry's diversity allows entrepreneurs to find a niche that aligns with their vision and goals: a casual cafe, a food truck offering gourmet street food, or an upscale dining establishment.

To bring it all into greater context, owning and operating a restaurant has its appeal for various reasons: personal passion, the opportunity to be your own boss, and the absolute desire to provide a prepared food product into the marketplace. Many restaurant owners are purely passionate about the culinary arts or see an opportunity to introduce a unique dining experience they believe is missing in their community. Passion cannot only fuel the initial opening, but it must sustain the business through the obstacles and challenges it will face. Opening a restaurant is often more about building a legacy for the family, seeking a dependable income to support the family, and contributing something meaningful to the community.

Despite its challenges, the restaurant industry will always have a customer base looking for dining experiences. Restaurants survive and thrive because of a consistent demand for eating out or taking out food in this faster-paced society. With careful planning and management, restaurants can

achieve a positive profit margin, making it a potentially lucrative business. Being a restaurant owner means being your own boss and having the freedom to make strategic decisions about the business. It also offers the opportunity to build and work with a team that shares your vision and commitment to quality and service. For those who love socializing, a restaurant provides countless opportunities to interact with a diverse clientele. There is a saying in the restaurant industry that no two days are the same. That can make for an exciting and fulfilling career for those who thrive in fast-paced, dynamic environments. Some restaurant models, like breakfast and lunch spots, can

offer more lifestyle flexibility with shorter operating hours, allowing owners to enjoy more personal or family time.

Starting or purchasing an existing restaurant is undoubtedly a challenging effort, involving hard work, planning, and dedication. However, for many, the rewards of creating a beloved dining spot, bringing joy to customers through food, and building a successful business outweigh the risks and challenges.

So, do you really want to own a restaurant?





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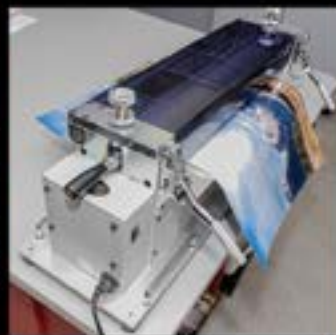
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THE LAST GREAT BEATLES SUMMIT: LOVE'S LASTING LEGACY

By Jeremy Louwerse and Stacey Gualandi

“*T*here was Paul, and then Ringo, Yoko, and Olivia (Harrison), but then you looked up in the sound booth, and there was George Martin with his sleeves rolled up next to his son Giles!”

Chris Carter, the legendary host of “Breakfast With The Beatles”

(on SiriusXM and KLOS in Los Angeles), is waxing nostalgic about June 30, 2006, the historic Grand Opening of Cirque du Soleil’s Beatles’ LOVE show at the Mirage Hotel and Casino on the Las Vegas Strip. Historic for many reasons, but mainly because this would be the last great gathering of the Fab Four family.

“It was like you were at Abbey Road or something!” Carter says. After many years behind the mic of America’s longest-running Beatles show, Carter was one of

Above: (L-R) Giles Martin, Ringo Starr, Sir George Martin, Dominic Champagne - director, Sir Paul McCartney, Yoko Ono, Guest, Olivia Harrison, Guy Laliberte - Cirque du Soleil founder. Photo by KMazur/WireImage via Getty Images.



Olivia Harrison, Ringo Starr, Barbara Bach, Sir Paul McCartney, and Yoko Ono with the cast of LOVE. Photo by Kevin Mazur/Cirque du Soleil.

the fortunate few to have a front-row seat.

Looking back, it would be a night never-to-be-repeated.

The original idea for LOVE was borne out of the late George Harrison's imagination. He deeply desired to do more with the band's legacy and happened to be close personal friends with Cirque founder Guy Laliberte.

When Harrison passed in 2001, his wife Olivia made George's original vision a reality.

By 2006, the \$130 million production, created by Dominic Champagne, would be Cirque's fifth permanent showpiece in Las Vegas. Anticipation had been building for months. What was the audience going to see, hear, and experience? As with any Beatles-related production, there is always a shroud of secrecy, so rumors continued to swirl until opening night.

"It was a big secret, and you didn't know what you were going to see," Carter says. "We did know there was going to be this whole new treasure trove of [music] mixes coming out, but you didn't know what they were like." Of course, the mastermind be-

hind those mixes was the Beatles' long-time producer George Martin. Often referred to as "The Fifth Beatle," Martin produced the Beatles from the very beginning, even playing instruments in many of their songs.

On this momentous occasion, it marked the passing of the torch to Martin's then 36-year-old son Giles. Following in his famed father's footsteps to "reimagine" Beatles music—at Abbey Road Studios, no less—was an enormous responsibility for the up-and-coming producer.

"When I look back, I think about being in the room and trying to come up with ideas for the show



Above Left: Musician Julian Lennon, John Lennon's son, and his mother Cynthia arrive at the gala premiere of "The Beatles LOVE by Cirque du Soleil" at The Mirage Hotel & Casino June 30, 2006 in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images)

Above Right: Musician Ringo Starr, with his wife actress Barbara Bach, arrives at the gala premiere of "The Beatles LOVE by Cirque du Soleil" at The Mirage Hotel & Casino June 30, 2006 in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images)



and thinking, 'Well, this is a fun ride, but I'll probably get fired at some point,'" Giles jokes.

Together, father and son created the 90-minute show's soundscape, combining traditional mop tops' tunes and the visual sensation of Cirque du Soleil with his own "risky" interpretations of the Beatles' most popular songs. Ultimately, he would have to play his tracks for the living band members.

"My dad hadn't heard it. He came to Abbey Road, listened to it, and wasn't sure about some of the riskier things I had done," Giles reminisces.

"When Paul [McCartney] came in, my dad wouldn't let me play the riskier stuff [but] Paul said, 'You know, I think you should go further.'"

Giles then played McCartney the versions he had been working on.

"Paul said, 'This is what you should be doing. This is what I want to do; let's make a difference here.' Ringo [Starr] felt the same way," Giles says.

In Las Vegas months later—with the music compilations about to be revealed to the world—two generations of Martins walked the Grand Opening red carpet.

Giles says that his smile shielded sheer nerves.

"I was very nervous about how it would be received," Giles admits. "You have to bear in mind that when we did the LOVE show, there were no shows pretty much in the world at that scale that had just playback audio. My biggest fear is that people would go, 'Wait a second, they just listened to a CD or a recording.'"

Not to mention, it was the biggest reunion of Beatles royalty in attendance since the band's breakup, including McCartney, Starr, Yoko Ono, Cynthia and Julian Lennon, Olivia Harrison, plus luminary members of their inner circle like Ravi Shankar, Brian Wilson, and Eric Idle.

"It's the first time really that I've seen Paul and Ringo and Yoko and Olivia and Dhani and Sean



and the families all together watching the show," Giles says.

While recording station IDs for his legendary radio show, Carter witnessed it all, even running into Giles and his famous father together on their big night.

"The Martins never seem nervous; they are very cool. They're like right out of a Bond movie," Carter says.

But the stage had been officially set for the biggest launch in Giles Martin's musical career.

"He was creating this new landscape that had never been heard before, and it could have been embarrassing and really bad, but it was super cool and perfect," Carter adds.

As the VIPs sat in the more than 2,000-seat theater-in-the-

round, surrounded by speakers in the seats, on the floors, and everywhere else, the lights went down, and the music took over.

With vocals from "Because" at the start to the voice of John Lennon saying "Goodnight to yous all and God bless you" at the end of the show, the entire production was a technical triumph.

The crowd stood and applauded as Paul McCartney took to the stage and shouted, "This is for John and George!"

At last, Giles could finally enjoy the fruits of his and his father's labor.

"[With] the standing ovation, I kind of knew we'd done it, we knew we'd made it, and I knew that we made something really special that would last for a long time," Giles says.

Above Left: Yoko Ono, widow of Beatles' singer John Lennon, arrives at the gala premiere of "The Beatles LOVE by Cirque du Soleil" at The Mirage Hotel & Casino June 30, 2006 in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images)

Above Right: Musician Brian Wilson, of the Beach Boys, arrives at the gala premiere of "The Beatles LOVE by Cirque du Soleil" at The Mirage Hotel & Casino June 30, 2006 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The show is a joint artistic venture between The Beatles' company, Apple Corps Ltd., and Cirque du Soleil. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images)

Not holding back, Ringo Starr said he was delighted with the entire experience after the premiere. "I thought the show was great; I thought the music was incredible, and I think the show is so expressive of that time, really," Starr said in 2006. "It was emotional because two of us aren't there, so it really comes home when you're watching this."

Also emotional, Yoko Ono said,

"The only regret is that John [Lennon] is not here because I'm sure that he would have loved it."

At the premiere after-party, the audience and cast gathered to celebrate.

"It was like every character in *Austin Powers* was there; it was truly the greatest '60s party; the women all looked like Patti Boyd, plus it had the real people that would be at a cool '60s party," Carter remembers.

Since its defining debut, Cirque du Soleil's LOVE has performed more than 7,600 shows and entertained more than 11 million guests.

The show boasts 83 artists and a 150-person crew and staff totaling 233 people, making the show happen twice a night, five nights a week.

It remains a destination experience for anyone visiting the Las Vegas Strip.

But after the shocking announcement in 2023 that Hard Rock International purchased and will be transforming the Mirage Hotel and Casino into a new Hard Rock Las Vegas property, the question every devoted Cirque and Beatles fan was asking is what's next for their beloved LOVE?

In a press release then, the new owner said it would extend the 18-year-old show from the previous ownership and made a deal to keep it running "through at least 2024."



But just before publication, Cirque du Soleil suddenly announced that the show would end on July 7th as part of the iconic hotel-casino's rebranding renovation plan.

Devastating news for sure, but there's no doubt June 30, 2006, was an unforgettable night in Beatles history and introduced Giles Martin and his talents to the world.

He would go on to remix several Beatles albums and co-produce

An original program for "The Beatles LOVE by Cirque du Soleil."

(with Paul McCartney) the last Beatles single, "Now And Then," which dropped last year and reached No. 1 in Great Britain.

Not bad for the producer who once said that fateful night in 2006, "I'm not really one of them. I just actually move knobs around."

When asked if he still feels that

way, Giles joked, "A dirty knob twiddler?" But quickly put his current position into perspective.

"I suppose I'm part of the family in respect to being trusted with their material, and that's something I never take for granted," Giles says.

"I never imagined I'd work on any Beatles music at all. LOVE was a life-changing experience for me," Giles adds. "I'm still working with the Beatles, and it's been an unbelievable ride. I'm still not certainly one of them, but I'm really, really happy they still ask me to work on their music."

LOVE would be his father's last Beatles album before he passed in 2016, yet Giles says it brought George Martin back into the



Top: A cast member performs during "Octopus's Garden" for "The Beatles LOVE by Cirque du Soleil." (Photo by Matt Beard, courtesy of Cirque du Soleil)

Above: Ringo Starr with Chris Carter, host of Breakfast with the Beatles. (Photo courtesy of Chris Carter)

Left: Cast members perform during "Revolution" for "The Beatles LOVE by Cirque du Soleil." (Photo by Matt Beard, courtesy of Cirque du Soleil)



family and the inner workings of the Beatles.

"You have to remember the backdrop of this: the Beatles didn't ask him to produce "Free As A Bird," which was the record they made during 1995's Anthology, so he was reentering a family that he'd not been part of for a while," Giles explains. "To be arm-in-arm with them on stage was pretty special."

Not only is the LOVE show a Cirque success story, but it will always be a part of the Beatles lore.

"You are expanding the legacy of The Beatles to a completely different audience," Carter emphasizes. "There's probably 40 percent

of the audience who have no Beatles albums at home, and it also brings in the most hardcore fan."

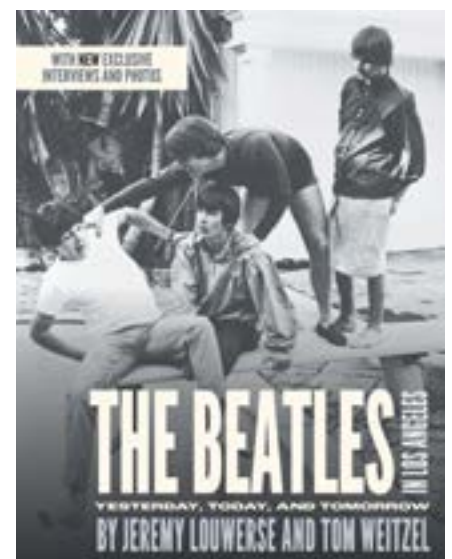
Giles Martin agrees. "The legacy of the show is also bringing new people and new audience members to the world of the Beatles, and indeed the world of Cirque. That's what the LOVE show is. It's been a landmark in my life, but it also created unique experiences for millions of people, and that's an incredible thing to be part of."

All we need is LOVE.

Jeremy Louwerse is the co-author of "The Beatles in Los Angeles." Visit thebeatlesinlosangeles.com

Above: Sir George Martin, Sir Paul McCartney, Olivia Harrison, Yoko Ono, Barbara Bach, and Ringo Star. (Photo by Kevin Mazur courtesy of Cirque du Soleil)

Below: The Beatles in Los Angeles: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow written by Jeremy Louwerse and Tom Weitzel

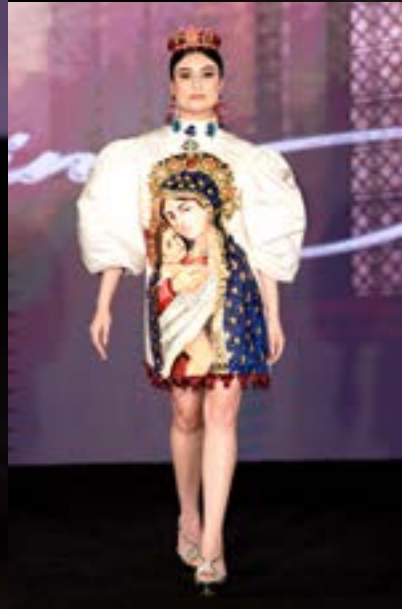


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FROM CULINARY MASTERY TO ARTFUL TREASURES: THE GOLDEN STEER CURATES SENSORY DELIGHTS

By Laura Henkel

Step into the realm of sensory delight at The Golden Steer, where culinary artistry seamlessly blends with an ambiance steeped in elegance and history. As you immerse yourself in this unique atmosphere, your gaze is inevitably drawn to the distinguished walls adorned with a captivating mix of art, antique firearms, classic memorabilia, and vintage photographs, evoking a sense of nostalgia for a bygone era. In this moment, the realization washes over you – you have entered a timeless sanctuary, a revered bastion of Las Vegas lore that stands as a testament to its rich heritage. Like a beacon amidst the towering casinos of the Strip, The Golden Steer exudes an aura of tradition and prestige, beckoning guests to experience its enduring legacy firsthand.

Since its inception in 1958, the walls whisper tales of Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio, their romance immortalized in the inti-



Photo courtesy of The Golden Steer

mate confines of a swank tufted red booth, where chilled champagne flowed freely. During the Rat Pack's heyday, Sammy Davis, Jr. himself graced these hallowed halls, crooning with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin after a few too many libations. From Clint Eastwood to Steve McQueen, Mel

Torme to John Wayne, The Golden Steer has welcomed an illustrious array of guests spanning from Hollywood royalty and beloved local legends to politicians and mobsters, each leaving an unforgettable imprint on its rich history. The proprietors, Dr. Michael J. Signorelli, Amanda Signorelli and

Nick McMillon have spared no effort in preserving this rich history while consistently seeking out distinctive artifacts to enhance their already remarkable collection.

I had the privilege of contributing new treasures to the restaurant's first expansion in 50 years when invited by Amanda and Nick to assist in their hunt for unique objects to add to their already impressive collection of art and antiquities. Their expansion strategy seamlessly blends tradition with innovation, exemplified by the in-

roduction of two new enchanting thematic spaces: The Armory and The Gambler's Den. Their dedication as custodians of this legacy is further exemplified by the extent of their passion to curate extraordinary experiences for all the senses.

In their commitment to honoring the institution's legacy, the owners implemented a series of thoughtful steps for the expansion. This included crafting bespoke wooden door frames meticulously designed to mirror the original aes-

thetic and millwork of the existing spaces. They scoured for 1980s lighting fixtures, matching them to archived photos for authenticity. Not stopping there, they ensured the installation of popcorn ceilings, all in a bid to preserve the restaurant's timeless aesthetic and heritage. Additionally, the restaurant's charm and elegance are further elevated by the presence of exquisite stained-glass creations throughout the venue and crafted by local artist Rick Falzone. Initially commissioned in the 1970s for the bar and main dining area, Falzone revisited his masterpieces in 2023 to adorn the expansion with his timeless artistry, creating a cohesive and visually captivating air throughout the establishment. Staying true to the ethos of combining vintage charm with modern innovation, YESCO (Young Electric Sign Company), the infamous sign company responsible for lighting up our neon metropolis since the 1930s, recently revitalized the exterior signage, infusing it with classic Vegas style to watt up your life.

While immersing myself in their collection, I uncovered the rich narratives behind each artifact adorning the walls. For instance, there is a remarkable poster featuring Frank Sinatra, performing



Left: Frank Sinatra poster performing live at The London Palladium (1950). Photo by Cashman Photo

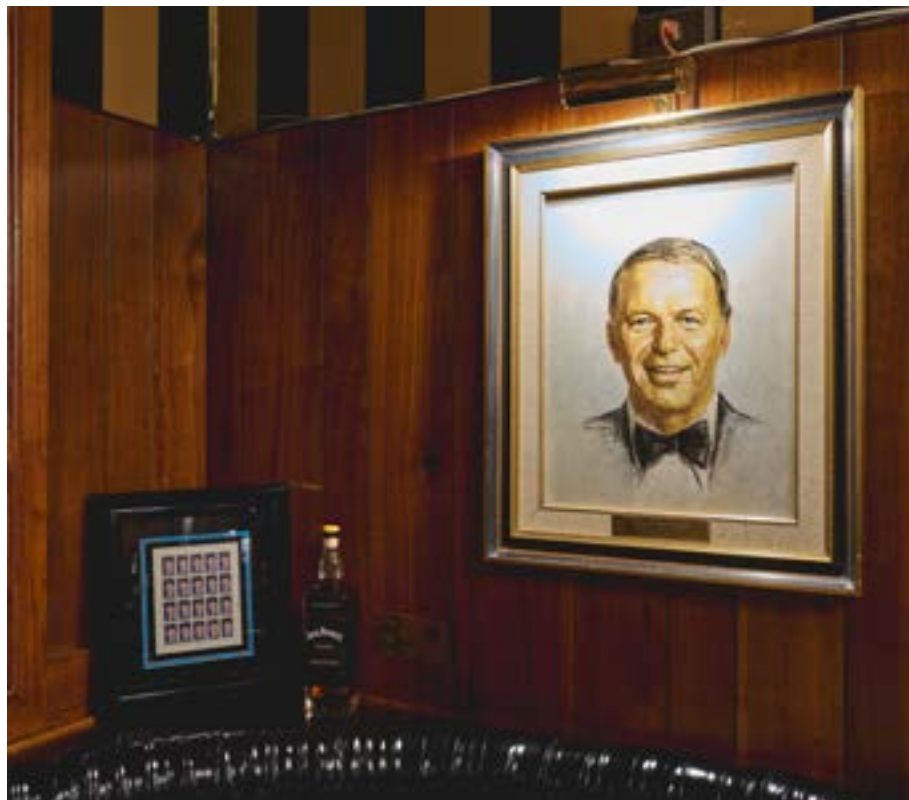
Top Right: Stained Glass (1970) by Rick Falzone. Photo by Cashman Photo

Bottom Right: Mounted longhorn embossed with initials of Ralph "Cowboy Sheriff" Lamb. Photo by Cashman Photo



live at The London Palladium in 1950, acquired at auction from his estate in New York. Gracefully embellishing the entire steakhouse, you'll find the most remarkable and impressively sized mounted longhorns. Keep an eye out for the initials RL elegantly monogrammed into leather; these belonged to none other than Ralph Lamb, the legendary Cowboy Sheriff of Clark County, whose indelible mark was left during the Mob's reign over Las Vegas. Amidst the fusion of 50s Hollywood glamour captured in photographs and the rugged allure of old-west paintings, you will discover an array of antique guns proudly displayed on the walls, adding a touch of history and intrigue to the ambiance.

Delving into the world of firearms unveils a remarkable assortment of treasures, each carrying its own iconic legacy. As you are escorted to dine in The Armory and The Gambler's Den, your attention is immediately captured by the elements accompanying a coveted .32 caliber antique Remington Dog Cane Gun, a relic from the late 1800s, of which only 2000 were ever crafted. This rarity represents a striking fusion of impeccable style and precise function, epitomizing the most tasteful and well-dressed self-defense accessory of its era. Other standouts are the most beautiful replicas of Wild Bill Hickok's legendary 1851 Navy Colt revolvers with engraved ivory grips. If you are wondering why the originals are not on display, it is because each revolver is currently housed at the Gene Autry Museum of Heritage in Los An-



geles, California, and the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, Wyoming. They are estimated to have a total appraised value of \$1 million. In a city where poker players converge, it seems rather fitting to have Hickok's pistols displayed. I am sure Lady Luck has dealt many a Dead Man's Hand at the tables over the years. For those not in the know, this is a two-pair poker hand with black aces and black eights and reportedly was the hand Hickok was holding when he was killed.

As sophistication and refinement imbue in The Amory and the Gambler's Den, there are remarkable photographs of architectural wonders, outlandish triumphs, and notable Las Vegas influencers that contribute to the rich tapestry of what makes the city so fantastic today. Guests can savor the swank mid-mod design

Above: Request Sinatra's table and dine like Old Blue Eyes. Photo by Cashman Photo

Top Right: Flamingo Hotel & Casino (1953) Photo by Cliff Segerblom for the Las Vegas News Bureau. Photo of framed art by Cashman Photo

Bottom Right: The Flight Endurance World Record (1958). Photo courtesy of Howard W. Cannon Aviation Museum. Photo of framed artwork by Cashman Photo

of the Flamingo Hotel & Casino, captured in 1953 by Cliff Segerblom, a revered and sought-after Nevada artist. It's worth noting that architect William Pereira, famous for designing the Transamerica Pyramid building in San Francisco, also designed the infamous 80' Champagne Tower in 1950, as featured in this photograph. Only in Vegas one might say, but imagine this: a Cessna 172 fueling up mid-flight from a



Flamingo, Las Vegas, Nevada
© 1950s
Photograph by [unreadable]



moving pickup truck, proudly displaying the 'Cashman' brand—an emblem of a prominent Las Vegas family dynasty. This incredible feat lasted a staggering 64 days, 22 hours, and 19 minutes, setting the world endurance record for a propeller-driven airplane. It all began on December 4, 1958, and gracefully touched down on February 7, 1959. And the morsels of Vegas history are the gift that keeps on giving. In the Gambler's Den, several photographs of Kirk Kerkorian, an influential figure in shaping Las Vegas long before Steve Wynn, known as the Father of the Mega-Resorts, and later became one of the city's biggest philanthropists, are surrounded by the finest gambling memorabilia. With such an impressive array of visual delights within the renowned restaurant, a visit to The Golden Steer promises an unforgettable journey through the intersection of art and culture Vegas-style.

The unwavering commitment to detail by The Golden Steer's leadership recently garnered them the prestigious Mayor's Urban Design Award for Historic Preservation in collaboration with their architectural design partners, Carpenter Sellers Del Gatto. Established by Mayor Oscar Goodman in 2006, the award commemorates excellence in urban design and recognizes individuals and organizations championing quality and innovation in this domain. The special distinction was graciously bestowed by the honor-

able Mayor Carolyn Goodman. It is notable that this recognition holds additional significance, not only due to the hard work of the design collaborators, but also because Mayors Oscar and Carolyn Goodman have been patrons of the restaurant since the 1960s. They too have a swank red tufted booth dedicated to them, and rightly so, for all their incredible contributions to Las Vegas. Receiving the award, from my perspective, is a very full-circle moment that is endearing since all parties have accomplished so much independently of each other, and can break bread together in celebration of each other's esteemed accomplishments in one of Las Vegas' illustrious establishments – and dare I say - their home away from home.

As the sun dips below the horizon, painting the vibrant streets of Las Vegas with a warm glow, The Golden Steer emerges as a

timeless emblem of culinary mastery and cultural legacy. This renowned establishment has stood as a steadfast cornerstone of the community, enchanting all who visit. It's a sanctuary where tales of yesteryears are shared, and echoes of a vibrant past reverberate in every corner, keeping the spirit of Las Vegas's colorful heritage alive.

Whether you are a seasoned epicurean, a connoisseur of art, or someone with a penchant for history, visiting The Golden Steer offers an unforgettable journey that transcends mere dining. It's an immersive adventure—a voyage into the heart and soul of Las Vegas itself. By contributing your presence to the space, you become part of the tapestry. From posting your experiences on social media to sharing your own stories, you too become part of the rich history for future generations to enjoy.



Entering The Armory and Gambler's Den. Photo by Cashman Photo

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BEFORE THE NEON

New State Park Takes Visitors on an Informative and Entertaining Journey into Las Vegas' Past

By Heather Turk





One of Las Vegas' coolest new attractions invites visitors to step back in time to when Las Vegas was wet and green, and herds of large herbivores like ancient bison and Columbian mammoths roamed the land.

Located just 20 minutes north of the Las Vegas Strip, Ice Age Fossils State Park opened to the public this past January. Although

Left: Officially announced in 2017 as part of Governor Brian Sandoval's "Explore Your Nevada Initiative," Ice Age Fossils State Park opened to the public on Jan. 20, 2024. Photo courtesy of Nevada State Parks

construction started in 2018, the 315-acre state park was nearly 25,000 years in the making.

"Ice Age Fossils State Park stands out as a unique and educational destination amidst the city's renowned entertainment and nightlife," said Tyler Kerver, education and information officer for the Nevada Division of State Parks' conservation and natural resources department. "This park offers an enriching experience, allowing visitors to delve into the prehistoric past and learn about the ancient animals that once inhabited the region during the Ice Age. Be-

Above: The "Monumental Mammoth" sculpture is a prominent feature of Ice Age Fossils State Park. Photo by Heather Turk

yond its educational significance, the park provides a tranquil outdoor environment for activities like hiking and exploration, offering a refreshing escape from the urban hustle. For both locals and visitors, the park contributes to the preservation of natural heritage, fosters scientific curiosity, and adds a distinctive layer to the diverse attractions of Las Vegas."

Costing nearly \$14.4 million, Ice Age Fossils State Park boasts a



\$4 million visitor center where guests can learn more about the ancient and modern-day history of the North Las Vegas attraction. Visitors can see a full-size Camelops skeleton replica on display, play interactive fossil games, and watch a 10-minute video about the park, all while learning about the study of paleontology and the megafauna that lived in the area. Several fossils are also showcased, all found in the park between the 1990s and early

Above: Even though the springs have dried up, the Las Vegas Wash Trail is still home to colorful flora. Photo by Heather Turk

Right: Hike part of the longest trench cut during the Big Dig, Trench K, on the Big Dig Trail. Photo courtesy of Nevada State Parks

2000s when the last major fossil dig took place on its grounds.

While guests will see such interesting items on display as a 7-and-a-half-foot tusk that came

from a Columbian mammoth that lived on the land around 14,500 years ago, arguably the most fascinating part about Ice Age Fossils State Park is the nearly 4 miles of trails found just outside the visitor center. Guests can view metal sculptures of the megafauna species that once roamed the grounds, including Shasta ground sloths and saber-toothed cats, on the .3-mile Megafauna Trail; see lush vegetation while descending into a wash and strolling through 100,000 of geologic history on the 1.5-mile Las Vegas Wash Trail; and walk around the famous Big Dig area and through part of the historic Trench K site on the 1.2-mile Big Dig Trail.

Undoubtedly one of Las Vegas' most unforgettable experiences, the Big Dig Trail takes hikers through part of the 1962-63 Tule Springs Expedition. The four-month-long study brought in researchers from a variety of fields who used heavy equipment and cutting-edge technology, including the new technique of radio-





One-third of all the large mammal fossils found at Ice Age Fossils State Park came from the now-extinct Camelops. Photo by Heather Turk

carbon dating, to try to prove that the earliest humans in North America inhabited Tule Springs. Pockets of black material resembling charcoal, sometimes mixed with the blackened bones of megafauna species, were found on site in 1933. In 1954, additional charcoal samples collected in the area were radiocarbon-dated. The samples, believed to be 23,800 years old, would make Tule Springs the oldest archeological site in North America, potentially rewriting the story of human migration into the Americas.

Although the Big Dig could not verify claims of a human presence in the area beyond 13,000 years ago, researchers returned to Tule Springs in the late 1990s and early 2000s to study its fossil history and geology. Hundreds of fossil sites were discovered around the springs, expanding the public's understanding of what Las Vegas was like during the Ice Age. While on the Big Dig Trail, visitors will not only hike past what was once believed to be the site of the oldest campfires, which eventually led to the Big Dig expedition, but also hike past Dire Wolf Hill, where, nearly 50 years later, students from UNLV discovered a dire wolf knuckle bone—the first

discovery of the species in Nevada.

Guests will also pass by researchers' campsites and the canyon where paleontology students unintentionally rediscovered a site from the Big Dig while excavating a mammoth tusk in 2011. Surrounding the tusk were scraps of newspaper, one of which had a print date from 1963, showing that the tusk had been partially excavated during the Big Dig. Visitors can now see the 3-and-a-half-foot tusk on display inside the visitor center and a small piece of the newspaper it was found in.

While none of Ice Age Fossils



The metal animal sculptures on the Megafauna Trail are a big hit with children visiting the park. Photo courtesy of Nevada State Parks

State Park's three trails are extremely challenging, the Las Vegas Wash Trail and the Big Dig Trail are rocky and involve several steps at points, making them inaccessible to wheelchairs and strollers. The Megafauna Trail, though still unpaved, is a bit more family-friendly. None of the trails have much shade, so hikers are strongly encouraged to bring lots of sunscreen and water to stay hydrated.

Since Ice Age Fossils State Park is a historic paleontological site, fossils are still discovered in the park and can sometimes be viewed

from the trails. Guests should make sure their camera phones are charged so they can take plenty of photos. There is also a sculpture near the park entrance where visitors can take pictures with the "Monumental Mammoth." The sculpture, made of steel and recycled materials, was the idea of Las Vegas Girl Scout Tahoe Mack, who envisioned constructing a life-sized Columbian mammoth using materials collected from the grounds and various other sites around the park during public clean-up efforts. While the sculpture now stands as a symbol of Nevada's Pleistocene past and the importance of protecting the Tule Springs fossil beds, it was previously on display in 2019 at Burning Man and downtown Las Vegas' Life is Beautiful festival.

Ice Age Fossils State Park is open Wednesday through Sunday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Each guest must pay a \$3 admission fee, which can be paid in the visitor center right next to the gift shop. Visitors will want to give themselves at least 3 hours to explore the trails and visitor center, so be sure to plan your trip accordingly and factor in some extra time if you want to take advantage of the covered picnic areas on the grounds to have lunch. Regardless of how long you stay at the park, you're sure to leave with a newfound appreciation of Nevada's natural history.

For more information, visit parks.nv.gov/parks/ice-age-fossils.



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JAMES BEARD AWARD-WINNING CHEF SHAWN MCCLAIN AND MASTER SOMMELIER NICK HETZEL TEAM UP AT THE NEWLY OPENED WINEAUX

Article and Photography by Elaine and Scott Harris

Las Vegas off-strip dining has been exploding in the last four or six years, and now there is yet another addition... special...very special.

Wineaux just opened at UnCommons in Southwest Las Vegas, and it is a collaborative effort between renowned culinary and wine experts coming together to create a brilliant space. Founded and created by James Beard Award-winning Chef Shawn McClain, Master Sommelier Nick Hetzel, and restaurateurs Richard and Sarah Camarota, Wineaux offers a unique and immersive experience for wine enthusiasts unmatched in Las Vegas.

Wineaux brings a passionately curated wine bar and retail experience for its guests. The wine selection is designed to encourage



wine exploration for the seasoned collector and those new to wine collecting. Chef McClain brilliantly designs the menu to pair with the hand-selected wines to create a

one-of-a-kind pairing experience. The wine market and bar encompass 2,500 square feet of mixed retail and bar/lounge space accented with natural woods, layers



Wineaux's James Beard Award-Winning Chef Shawn McClain

of bright stonework, and a mix of lounge-style, traditional, and bar seating. When you walk in, your eyes are drawn to the Tasting Table, which seats 12, surrounded by multi-tiered presentations of Wineaux's eclectic wine collection, all available for purchase and takeaway, along with the counter goodies featuring charcuterie, cheese, caviar, and other luxury amenities. And to top it off, Wineaux will introduce a 600-square-foot outdoor patio next year!

Perusing the menu created by McClain is a delicious celebration of shareables, snacks, and small plates that pair beautifully with wine. Highlights include chilled oysters with cucumber-kosho mignonette; beef tartare with salsa macha and horseradish; a Dungeness crab roll, served on brioche with stone-ground mustard aioli; foie parfait, with a Bordeaux gelee, Asian pear and toasted hazelnuts; and a whimsical almond

butter and jelly waffle. McClain's creatively shines with every bite.

"The vision for Wineaux is to embody a warm, sophisticated, playful feeling," says Sarah Camarota, creative director of McClain Camarota Hospitality. "We want to spark curiosity and make everyone feel at ease, welcome social sippers, wine aficionados, and big-time collectors alike."

"Wineaux is about creating a lifestyle brand and holistic wine experience. From the retail collection to the food and wines we serve at the bar, we want guests to have a bespoke experience designed specifically for them," said McClain. "Whether it's date night, dropping in with friends, curating your collection, or selecting gifts, we want people to stay curious and explore."

"We're excited to bring our vision of what wine exploration and tasting should look and feel like to the local Las Vegas community," says Hetzel. "Wine can be an overwhelming experience for many people, and our goal is to create an environment that is welcoming not only to the well-versed collectors but also those new to wine collecting."

Guests can explore a thoughtfully curated wine collection that celebrates classic favorites and exciting new discoveries. Whether seeking a familiar label or looking to venture into uncharted territory, Wineaux offers an array of options to suit every preference and occasion. Among the notable names featured in Wineaux's

collection are renowned producers such as Egon Müller and Jean Josselin, reflecting the team's commitment to offering a well-rounded and compelling assortment of wines.

Nick Hetzel explained there is even a Wineaux Wine Club with several options. The wine club offers two membership tiers with benefits and pricing for each tier. The Explorer's Club is designed for wine lovers who want to expand their wine knowledge. Members of this club receive two bottles of wine each month, a chef-select small plate, and a custom digital tasting booklet. The Explorer's Club is priced at \$72 monthly and offers monthly or quarterly billing options.

On the other hand, The Collector's Club is curated for wine enthusiasts looking to build their wine collections. Members of this club receive six bottles of prestigious, highly curated collectible



Wineaux's Master Sommelier Nick Hetzel

wines per quarter. They also enjoy benefits such as home collection consultation, access to exclusive events, discounts on purchases, and a custom digital tasting booklet. The Collector's Club is priced at \$995 per quarter.

In addition to its world-class wine experience, the retail experience is just as unique. Designed to cater to seasoned wine connoisseurs and novices alike, knowledgeable staff are on hand to provide guidance and recommendations, ensuring that each guest finds the perfect glass or bottle to complement their tastes and preferences from any price point featuring rare and allocated selections to exceptional wines that are sure to impress any oenophile.

With its prime location at UnCommons, Wineaux provides a welcoming and sophisticated setting for wine lovers to gather, unwind, and indulge in the pleasures of a well-crafted glass of wine. The combination of expertly curated selections, attentive service, and a vibrant atmosphere sets the stage for a memorable and enriching wine experience that is sure to captivate visitors and leave a lasting impression.

Wineaux
6887 Helen Toland St #110
Las Vegas, NV 89113
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DEATH CARD SERIES

Reading is a way to be drawn into another time and place. A good story can place us on a journey of words, open our minds, and inspire reflection.

We invite you to join in the journey of Rosie and her family in the Death Card Series.

It all begins here:

Death on the Strip

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

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

Death at the Lake

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

Death Returns

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

Death in the Shadows

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

Death on the Run

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

Death Comes Calling

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



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ABOUT TOWN



Chic Compass Launch Party at Gipsy Nightclub. (Photos by Bradley Hamm, Cashman Photo)
Above: (L-R) Marty Morawski, Stacey Gualandi, Annie Schley, Bill Schley
Left: (L-R) Stephanie Bolton, Brian G. Thornton, Sonya L. Coleman
Below Left: (L-R) Ann Parenti, Scott Harris, Elaine Harris
Below Right: Grant Tache, Lynda Tache, Robert Dolan





UNLV College of Fine Arts Hall of Fame (Photography by Anthony Billante, Cashman Photo)

Above: (L to R) Carmen Woodruff, Edith Alvarez, Felicia Hersh Lindquist, Nancy Matheny, Stacy Swim, Anne Silva, Donny Thompson

Below: James Stanford, Gemma Marmalade, and Laura Sanders.



Above: (L-R) Tina Machele Brown, Tyriq Johnson

Left: (L-R) Dean Nancy Uscher, UNLV College of Fine Arts with David Copperfield (Photo by Jam David, Cashman Photo)





UNLV College of Fine Arts Hall of Fame (Photography by Jam David, Cashman Photo)

Above Left: (L to R) Michele Rothstein, Kate Zhong, Mary Sinobio, Jennifer Vaughan, Amy Walmsley

Left: (L to R) Michael Sharon, Juliana McRae, Keith Thompson, Jay Alger, and Philip Fortenberry (the Composer Showcase Board of Directors).

Art from the Heart & Food for the Soul Chic Compass Launch Party at Via Brasil

Above Right: (L to R) Shirley and Robert Kramer, Ann Parenti



Songs from the Movies with Giada Valenti at Myron's Cabaret

Left: Ann Parenti, Anna Billings, Giada Valenti, Sondra Lynch, Sandra Roche



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