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VOLUME 7 | EDITION 1



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Chanelle Hayes
EDITOR

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Louie (L) and William (R) Tandiono-Cellona

From the Editor

Welcome to the first edition of *Chic Compass* for 2025! We appreciate your continued interest in and support of our publication as we enter our seventh year.

This edition's cover story features Louie and William Tandiono-Cellona, partners in both business and life. Their dedication to transforming the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and behavioral health challenges through their company, Tancell Care, is truly inspiring. Their work in the disability sector led to the opening of the Autism Pride Center, where people with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities can acquire and retain skills that promote independence, productivity and community engagement.

Stories like these bring us joy, and we are proud to share them with you in every edition. Since our launch in 2018, we have included specific features focusing on faith, charity, hope and grace. I wanted these themes to be the central focus of this edition's letter.

These features recognize the individuals and organizations bringing light into the world through kindness, compassion, optimism and support. In addition to Louie and William and their phenomenal impact on the community, I encourage you to explore more stories of faith, charity, hope and grace in this edition.

We begin with faith, featuring the Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada. Insights from Peter

Whittingham, the organization's chair and acting executive director, detail how it provides comfort and strength for families of children diagnosed with Down syndrome.

For our charity focus, we spotlight the Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation, which has provided emotional, financial, social, educational and psychological assistance to critically ill children and their families in Southern Nevada for more than three decades. Read about this remarkable charity and its fundraising efforts.

In our hope feature, we speak with Taras Krysa, an American conductor born in Ukraine who leads the Las Vegas Sinfonietta. This professional chamber orchestra impacts the community through inspiring classical music performances, including the "Violins of Hope" concert, which honors the resilience of Holocaust survivors and inspires optimism for the future.

Finally, our grace section introduces you to Alice Whitfield, who left her illustrious entertainment career to focus on her true passion: caring for horses at HAV Horse Rescue. Her dedication resonates deeply with us all.

As always, we bring you the best in celebrity features with interviews with Mark Wahlberg, Melba Moore and Bianca Belair in this edition. We also recap this year's Golden Globes, welcome Shelley Berkley as the new mayor of Las Vegas, and highlight Dale Mathis and Barbara and Larry Domsy, who are making waves in the art scene.

Additionally, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Vegas PBS KIDS Writers Contest Presented by Janice Allen. This initiative promotes children's literacy skills through hands-on, active learning. You'll hear from three past winners and learn where they are today.

As we turn the page on another year, we're excited to share more stories and perspectives with you in 2025. Here's to a year filled with faith, charity, hope and grace!

Chanelle Hayes



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LOUIE AND WILLIAM TANDIONO-CELLONA

BREAKING BARRIERS: A PATH TO INCLUSIVE EMPOWERMENT

By Chanelle Hayes / Photography by Cashman Photo

One thing that defines Louie Tandiono-Cellona, CEO of TC Group, a Las Vegas-based business consulting firm he co-founded with his partner-turned-husband, William, in December 2023, is his unwavering passion for people.

"As successful as I am in business, I have one philosophy," he says. "I don't do what I do for money. I don't pursue it for anything other than a simple meaning behind it all. I want people to know and feel they have a meaning and purpose in life. I think it's important to be that way because everything else will follow if you do something from the heart."

Louie's journey from growing up in the Philippines to his family's move to the United States has deeply influenced his commitment to giving back.

"I didn't want to take my life and the opportunities I was given for granted," he reflects.

This journey shaped his perspective and fueled his dedication to helping others. As his family's breadwinner, Louie wanted to work much harder



Above: Louie and William Tandiono-Cellona

to repay his mom's sacrifices and everything she did to get him where he is today.

Louie knew he didn't want to continue as a nurse, even though that's where he started his medical career.

He transitioned to business, earning a Bachelor of Science in business administration, management and operations in 2016. He later earned a Master of Business Administration from Capella University in 2018.

William's path to entrepreneurship began in Indonesia, where his parents instilled the values of leadership and success from an early age. Their vision for him to take over the family's packaging business and become a successful businessman ignited his passion for business.

This passion, coupled with his academic learning, led him to pursue a business education. In 2012, he graduated from the University of British Columbia Sauder School of Business with a Bachelor of Commerce degree with an emphasis on transportation and logistics.

Throughout his career, William has been self-taught on how to become a successful digital marketer. He worked at Cirque du Soleil for over five years, where he learned the art of digital marketing and social media management.

Louie and William got together in 2014 and have been inseparable ever since. Not only were they partners in their personal lives but also in business.

Together, they launched Tancell Care in 2018, an organization that offers resources, care and support to individuals in Southern and Northern Nevada with developmental disabilities and behavioral health issues.



Above: Louie Tandiono-Cellona

"Before William and I met, I was in the behavioral health industry," says Louie, who once served as a resident operations manager for New Beginnings Behavioral Treatment Agency and director of operations and marketing for Liaison Behavioral Health.

He also held several leadership roles within Seven Hills Behavioral Health Hospital.

Tancell Care was profoundly inspired by Louie's younger sister, Ladyann, who has Down syndrome.

This personal connection, born out of love and a desire to make a difference, is at the heart of their work in

the disability services sector. It fosters a sense of empathy and understanding, making them feel the emotional depth of their work.

Tancell Care takes a unique approach by offering various services designed to empower the individuals it serves and facilitate their integration into the community. The organization works with direct support professionals (DSPs) who provide daily support in residential and in-home settings. These professionals help individuals reach their personal goals while coaching, guiding, and supporting them through daily tasks. Similarly, the Autism Pride Center

(APC), a job and day training (JDT) provider that Louie and William launched in 2023 under the TC Group umbrella, provides a supportive environment for those with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities.

"We know that the intellectually disabled population is the most underserved, so we wanted to be that 1 percent at least to provide a difference through pre-vocational training, job exploration and day habilitation services and programs," Louie says.

Like Tancell Care, Louie's sister, Ladyann, utilizes APC's services and programs.

"I've been dealing with her all her life, and I say 'I'm dealing with her purposefully' because she's also my sister, so she's just as sassy as I am. I was surprised by many things when working with her through APC. Even though computer skills might have been difficult for her, she was very fond of the technology program."

After four or five months in the program, Louie went in for a surprise

visit and saw her working with one of the center's DSPs.

"She was answering math problems on the computer utilizing the mouse and keyboard," he recalled. "I was like, 'Where did you learn the skill from? I didn't even know you could do that.' So, seeing that was very inspirational for me, as her brother."

Ladyann's story is just one of the many inspiring success stories of individuals helped by Tancell Care and APC. These programs not only provide resources and support but have empowered individuals to discover and pursue their passions, leading to transformative changes in their lives.

Another moving story is about a woman who first came to Louie and William through Tancell Care in 2019 with many restrictions, including being unable to be around sharp objects.

"After working with her for a few years, we saw her progress, and when she was ready to find employment, we began assisting her at APC," William says.

Not knowing her passion, she came with an open mind and took a keen interest in the beauty and fashion department.

"In those industries, you'll always be around sharp objects, like scissors and needles, so we were initially scared when she wanted to pursue it," William says.

"However, her growth and determination to overcome her fear led her to aspire to become a cosmetologist. Knowing that she can thrive in that setting by giving her resources and the opportunity to be exposed to the industry moved me."



Left: William Tandiono-Cellona



Above: Louie and William Tandiono-Cellona

APC also offers programs and activities to promote social development, including art classes and group outings, and frequently provides workshops on independent living skills, such as budgeting, to help participants gain independence.

Those interested in getting assistance through Tancell Care and APC must undergo a specific process, as all of their contracts are through the Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division and the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation.

If someone were interested in services, they would first have to have a primary diagnosis of some intellectual disability, such as Down syndrome, Asperger's syndrome, mild intellectual disability or autism. Then, they would have to have a case open with the Desert Regional Center.

According to Louie, once a case is open, the individual would be put on a waiting list. "Right now, we have almost 4,000 people on a waiting list because there are approximately

22 providers available," he says. "So, as you can imagine, our waiting list is also pretty high."

However, sometimes, an individual's circumstances can take priority over others depending on their level of need. "Some providers will accept individuals with higher behavioral acuity, while others might consider those with higher medical acuity," he says.

After a case is opened with the Desert Regional Center, the case manager will send a referral to see if they would fit one of Tancell Care or APC's services and programs.

According to Louie, each case is different, but once someone gets into one of their programs, they can serve them for as long as they feel they need to gain that level of independence, with some needing assistance throughout their lives.

"They were born with a little bit more needs and have never seen normalcy the way we who aren't intellectually disabled would see it through our own lenses," he says.

For them, everything is new. "When they learn something new, they're so grateful for it," he adds. "We need to teach them skills continuously. So, our longest participant has been with us since we opened Tancell Care in 2018."

To reach more people in the community, the dynamic duo has actively formed partnerships with local businesses and brands that support individuals with disabilities.

In August 2024, they collaborated with Swim Week Las Vegas, presented by Art Hearts Fashion. The event was not only about bringing the hottest fashion and entertainment to the stage but also about making a

difference by collaborating with APC to emphasize its dedication to representation and inclusion for everyone.

"The partnership allowed the individuals we serve to not only walk down the runway but also wear designer clothing and showcase the designs they made down the runway," William says.

"They were so ecstatic about the opportunity. It melted our hearts to know we created a fashion show for them. It made us want to do so much more."

Continuing along in the fashion realm, Louie and William's TC Group will host Equilora, a fashion show and charity gala celebrating individuals with disabilities, at IPEC Las Vegas on March 13.

Its name encompasses many things. Equilora perfectly blends equity (inclusivity and fairness) with aura (distinguished and empowering presence) to unite and uplift the community.

Proceeds from Equilora will benefit FEAT of Southern Nevada, a non-profit committed to enhancing the lives of those in need.

The idea of Equilora came from APC's involvement in Swim Week Las Vegas.

"The individuals we work with through the center get a chance to showcase their skills throughout the entire production of the event, from everything from the music and artwork to the fashion," Louie says.

In addition, APC is also a corporate sponsor for Vegas PBS and works with them on many endeavors. Their partnership was formed after meeting with Irene Pengson from Vegas PBS, who kindly gave William a tour of their production site and spoke

about Vegas PBS and its vision and mission.

After the tour of their production site, William was informed that they wanted to partner with an organization to support a new program they were developing.

William immediately jumped in without hesitation and worked out a deal with Vegas PBS. The program became the PBS Kids series "Carl the Collector," which educates the community about autism. "It was a great privilege for APC to support the series because it showcases the daily life of an autistic child," he says.

Putting more perspective on it, many people in the community don't know how to deal with a person who has a disability, let alone interact with them through a simple conversation.

"This show provides a positive picture of that," William says, adding, "Individuals with disabilities need a space in the community to be acknowledged, understood, respected and appreciated, just like others want to be treated."

Louie and William will also collaborate with online retailer Zappos and move into the Zappos building, which will house both the TC Group and Tancell Care."

"Zappos will be one of their larger community partners for the year," Louie says. "Not only does Zappos specialize in adaptive shoes for people with disabilities, but their company culture and vision align with ours, which makes it the perfect partnership."

William added, "We're working on some projects with Zappos that we can't disclose now. But when the time comes, I am sure that Chic Compass will be one of the first to know."

Other major moves for Louie and William coming in 2025 include opening up their services to youth as young as 14 with their first-ever summer camp and after-school programming.

They're also creating a different type of JDT specializing in the restaurant industry. They'll partner with Aloha Kitchen to teach individuals with disabilities how to do everything from dishwashing and prepping meals to customer service skills and taking orders. This will help them get hired by restaurants or through an enclave program, a paid training to work as a team alongside other employees.

Louie and William have worked with more than 350 individuals with disabilities in Southern and Northern Nevada and hope to double that number by the end of 2025.

Not only have they helped so many people, but they also employ more than 300 employees at their facilities and companies.

"To do that within seven years is amazing; the sky's the limit for us," Louie says graciously.

"Our leaders and staff members are equally as passionate about the service of the individuals and the population we serve, and for that, we're truly grateful for them."

To learn more about TC Group's business consulting services, visit www.tcgroupmgmt.com.

For more information on Tancell Care or the Autism Pride Center, visit www.tancellcare.com or www.autismpridecenter.com.

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faith

MAXIMIZING POTENTIAL DOWN SYNDROME ORGANIZATION OF SOUTHERN NEVADA SERVES A UNIQUE POPULATION

By Debbie Hall / Photography courtesy of the Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada

The Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada (DSOSN) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to serving individuals with unique abilities, particularly those diagnosed with Down syndrome and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. The organization provides a variety of impactful programs and recreational activities, all of which are offered free of charge to its members.

Peter Whittingham, chair of the board of directors and acting executive director, is the organization's "volunteer in chief" and a staunch advocate for the Down syndrome community.

"The Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada was founded in 1987 by a group of families looking for target-specific services that addressed the needs of people with Down syndrome in Southern Nevada. There were just a few organizations that provided such services at the time, and these family members came together to create



Above: Peter Whittingham, chair of the board of directors of the Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada, Nevada Gov. Joe Lombardo, Linda Smith, and Wayne Newton at the Festival of Trees and Lights gala at the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino on Nov. 12, 2024



Above: The Festival of Trees and Lights gala honors Linda Smith at the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino on Nov. 12, 2024

this group of supportive families that have evolved over the years to now become one of the most respected voices of advocacy for people diagnosed with Down syndrome and other intellectual and developmental disabilities in Southern Nevada, and across the state for that matter,” Whittingham explained.

DSOSN aims to address the critical needs of its service population while promoting a positive perception of individuals with Down syndrome and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. The organization focuses on maximizing potential by providing programs that enhance self-awareness, self-confidence, and communication skills.

Over the years, membership in the organization and its services have expanded beyond people with Down syndrome to include the entire intellectual and developmental disability community, including those with autism.

“If you look at our service population and our active membership, you will see that it is made up of a mixture of diagnosed disabilities in the intellectual and developmental space. While the majority of our members are diagnosed with Down syndrome, there is a growing number of members who are on the autism spectrum and even some with undiagnosed disabilities. The interest of our organization now is really to advocate for and provide services to address the complex, changing and compelling needs of the members in our community who are diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” Whittingham said.

Their programs address what Whittingham calls the organization’s core pillars: education, employment, and independent living. All programs are designed to help members integrate into society in these three areas of their lives.

“The disability community needs to be active, and they need to have entertainment and social programs. All of those are important to us, and that’s why we offer recreational programs such as dance, performing arts, and athletic and sports

programs. However, we believe that for our members to be fully integrated and functional in our society, they must also be exposed to what I call the impactful programs that will help them integrate and be a viable part of, as opposed to just being there in a nonfunctional way, on the margins of society,” Whittingham said.

For example, in terms of education and the school system, a number of members did not have a chance to complete high school, and their reading skills were low. To help in a small way to address this issue, DSOSN created a series of programs to supplement what the schools do not cover. Its reading clinic, for example, is designed to help members improve their reading skills and comprehension proficiency.

Verbal communication is important, and their class on self-advocacy public speaking creates an environment where members can learn to express themselves confidently in public.

“Many of our members have been locked out of the digital space for several reasons. Students were sent home to work on the computer when the pandemic occurred. Our members were left out because they had not been exposed to the use of computers. We help our members catch up a little bit with our computer lab class.”

The informal curriculum in the computer lab teaches participants basic computer skills that many people without disabilities take for granted. These include learning key functions, sending an email, attaching a document, writing a letter and sending it by email. Participants are also taught another essential task: accessing information on the internet to educate, inform and entertain themselves like everyone else.

Creative outlets are just as important.

Members are exposed to dance instruction that helps them perform in unison as team members and showcase their unique skills on a stage for their families and others. DSOSN has partnered with Culture Shock to train members in dance.

DSOSN also offers a robust performing arts program featuring two major productions annually. For the last two years, adaptations of "The Wizard of Oz" and, most recently, "The Lion King" have been presented. They are now in production rehearsal for the hit movie and Broadway musical "Grease."

The organization also addresses early intervention needs with programs for families, especially first-time families with young children from infants to age 6. Music therapy and playgroup programs are offered in conjunction with Nevada Early Intervention Services and Dynamic Music Therapy.

Its art class is one of its most popular classes, attended weekly by at least 20 members, who have shown growth and improvement in their artistic skills.

Members also participate in recreational activities through collaborations with other partners. In some cases, DSOSN does not provide the activities directly but promotes programs offered by other organizations, such as the Miracle League and Special Olympics.

"We have a very active and vibrant recreational training bowling league. We look for different areas of interest and support our members to participate in activities that will enrich all aspects of their lives. All our programs are provided to our members free of charge, except for



our dance program, and we subsidize our members' fees for that particular program. To sustain our ability to provide these programs, we reach out to and encourage philanthropic organizations that support our community to come on board and see what we do, and together we can explore mutually beneficial ways that can help to support our members and our programs."

DSOSN's primary source of income is fundraising, especially through its two signature events: the Festival of Trees and Lights (FOTL) and the Las Vegas Buddy Walk.

"The FOTL was our first fundraising effort, started one year after the organization was created in 1987. For the last two years, we have had Gov. Lombardo attend and support our organization. With his support and blessing, we started a wonderful tradition: the annual Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award, which is given to an individual who has a history of outstanding service to the disability community," Whittingham said.

Above: The Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada offers art classes

Its latest honoree was Linda Smith, one of DSOSN's founding members, who has been a stalwart in this community, supporting and advocating for the disability community in general and the Down syndrome community in particular for more than 40 years.

"Coming up on March 21, we will be doing a building dedication where we'll be renaming our building to commemorate the memory of her son, Christopher Smith."

Buddy Walk is an annual event where people across the valley come together with one voice to unite behind the message of inclusion.

"For all members of the disability community, the message of inclusion carries one meaning. Although we may march behind our respective banners, we all come together, hand-in-hand, to support inclusion



Above: Peter Whittingham, chair of the board of directors of the Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada, with the DSOSN Dance Troupe at the Festival of Trees and Lights gala at the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino on Nov. 12, 2024



Left: Second from left: Catherine Nielsen, executive director of the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, and second from right, Peter Whittingham, chair of the board of directors of the Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada

for all. We are very rooted in the concept of inclusion," he added.

What does inclusion mean for the disability community? As Whittingham stated: "It means to acknowledge, accept, appreciate and engage members of our community in conversation so that they can feel included and a part of society. One of the best things you can do for

our members is to reach out and engage and involve them in your conversations, and you'll be surprised at the result of what you will hear when you engage our members in a conversation.

"We are taking a group of our members to the National Down Syndrome Society Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C., in

April. Members of our dance troupe will perform at the conference. If any of your readers can afford to and would like to make a financial donation toward our members attending the conference, please reach out."

Whittingham brings his passion and dedication to the organization.

"I serve in the capacity of chair and acting executive director for the organization, all of which is done on a volunteer basis. In order to hold the organization accountable, I

demanded that they pay me for my service, and they agreed to do that at a rate of \$1 a year. However, they also added a condition to my annual salary: For them to pay me a salary, I must agree to donate my time and at least \$1,500 a year to the organization.

"It was the best offer ever, and one that I could not refuse. I have been in law enforcement for more than 40 years, serving three different police departments, and retired from the Los Angeles Police Department as a police captain.

"I have never had a more self-satisfying job, occupation or opportunity to do more public good than I do as the volunteer in chief of the Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada. I started volunteering in this community 26 years ago when my daughter, Sophia, was born.

After seeing me crying for a month, she started to smile at me, and then I reached out to find a support group in California for the Down syndrome community. My life changed for the better ever since. When I retired from the LAPD and decided to move to Las Vegas, it was natural that I sought out an organization that supported the Down syndrome community. I found the DSOSN, and the rest, as they say, is what you are seeing here now.

"I have now reached my point of self-actualization by becoming a volunteer in a service organization like this. It is absolutely wonderful, and you can only understand the self-satisfaction I feel when you engage in the kind of work that we do here in the DSOSN. I invite anybody interested in serving and giving back to the community to reach out, and let's discuss how you can be a part of

the growth and development of this wonderful organization."

To contact Peter Whittingham directly, call 626-780-5976 or email pwhittingham@dsosn.org.

For more information about volunteering, donating or upcoming events, visit www.dsosn.org.

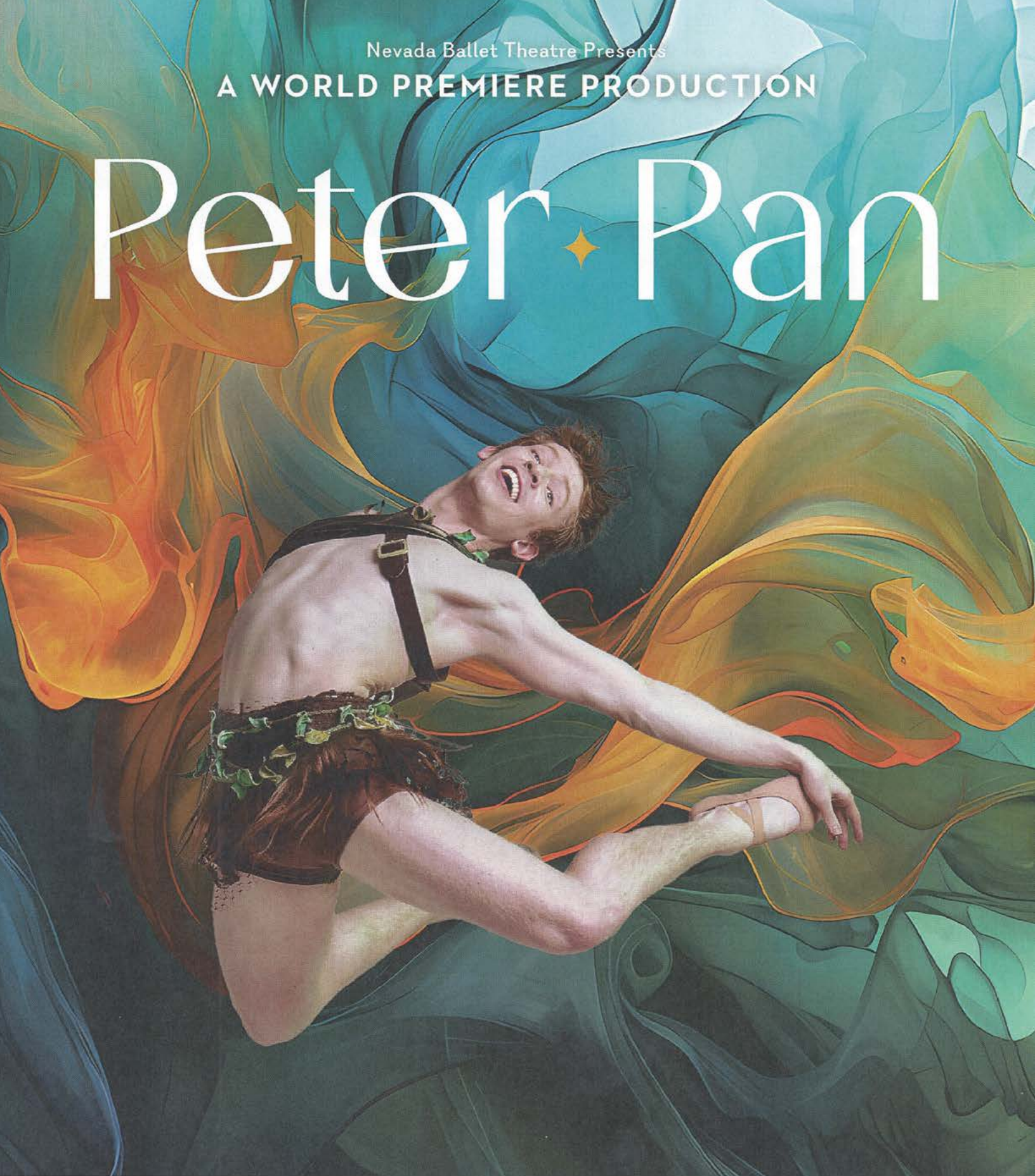
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Below from Left: Susan Walters, Bill Walters, First Lady Donna Lombardo, Nevada Gov. Joe Lombardo, Jon Ponder, and Jamie Ponder



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MELBA MOORE: 'I'M STILL STANDING'

By Sheryl Aronson

The lights dim in 54 Below, the iconic, plush, red-walled, cushioned-seated showroom in New York City that showcases legendary cabaret performers. Silence hushes the theater, but an anticipatory mood envelops the crowd. Suddenly, lights ignite a gorgeous, regal figure from the back, donned in a sublime turquoise and golden cape that covers a shimmering, matching blue gown.

Melba Moore looks stunning: her hair towers in a colossal Afro; her face is serene as she gazes over the audience before belting out the lyrics to "Easy to Be Hard" from "Hair." Strutting to the stage—still magnificent after 50-plus years in the entertainment business—Moore commands the moment and tells the world, "I'm still standing!"

Born into a musical family, Moore felt it was her destiny to carry the torch of an artist. Her mother, Bonnie Davis, was a professional singer; her natural father, Teddy Hill, was a big bandleader; and her stepfather, Clement Leroy Moorman, was a jazz pianist. As a child, Moore's life was saturated by music—piano



Above: Photo of Melba Moore by Sheryl Aronson (Sasaphotos)

lessons, listening to all genres and being influenced by her musical parents. She set her sights on attending Newark Arts High School and later earned a Bachelor of Arts in music from Montclair State College.

Moore's illustrious career has been marked by groundbreaking

achievements as a Black American female performer. For her role in "Purlie," she became the first Black actress to win a Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Musical. She was also the first Black woman to replace a white actress (Diane Keaton) in the lead role of the Broadway musical "Hair" and the first African



Above: Photo of Melba Moore by Sheryl Aronson (Sasaphotos)

American woman to play the female lead in "Les Misérables" on Broadway.

In her singing career, Moore rose to the top of the charts with hits like "Falling," "You Stepped into My Life," "Love's Comin' At Ya" and "A Little Bit More." A four-time Grammy-nominated artist, Moore has released 28 albums, appeared in 12 theater productions, acted in seven films and starred in multiple television shows. Her versatility spans genres, including R&B, soul, classical, jazz, contemporary and gospel.

Moore received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Aug. 10, 2023, and released a deluxe edition of her "Imagine" album the same year.

Although her career has reached the highest highs and faced the lowest

lows, Moore remains the embodiment of a pure entertainer—a master of her craft—and her brilliance shines in every glorious note.

Chic Compass: Melba, you're a legend and have been in the entertainment business for 50-plus years. How have you thrived in this very challenging industry?

Melba Moore: I love what I do. I've had a lot of help from so many people over the years. Every time I think about doing another project, whether music or theater, I've always had a great team around me to figure out my next project and get it done one step at a time.

Chic Compass: You grew up in a musical family. How did these influences shape your decision to become an entertainer?

Melba Moore: I'm sure it's in my blood since my natural father, Teddy Hill, was a big bandleader,

and my mother was a singer. My mother and he never married. She raised me as a single mom, and she traveled a lot; therefore, I was raised by a nanny. My mother married my stepfather when I was nine years old. I think of myself as a late starter, studying voice and piano at that age. My stepdad made all my siblings and I take piano lessons. At that point, I fell in love with music and discovered I could also sing. By high school, I was determined to make music my profession. I went to Arts High School, where I seriously began to focus on music.

Chic Compass: How did you develop your five-octave range? Was it natural, or did you have to work hard on it?

Melba Moore: I worked hard to develop my five-octave range. I was a soprano and trained as a classical vocalist. When I came out of college, I taught school for a while but was determined to become an artist who could sing R&B music. I listened to vocalists like Dionne Warwick and Aretha Franklin and began imitating their styles. If I wanted to sing R&B, I had to learn to holler and scream! I had a soft voice, so I started practicing belting out vocals. To strengthen my voice and stamina, I took dancing and swimming lessons. Over time, I built up my middle and lower ranges, which increased my power and range.

Chic Compass: You were very determined to work hard and had already learned a good work ethic. You grew up in an exciting time when rock'n'roll, R&B and disco came together in the 60s, 70s and 80s. How did you find your voice during this time? How did you develop the Melba Moore unique sound?

Melba Moore: That's a very good

question. It was quite difficult at first, and I must credit my former husband, Charles Huggins, a music producer. I had already won a Tony Award and performed on Broadway when I met him. Because of this recognition, I was invited to perform everywhere and signed my first recording contract with Mercury Records. Charles, who became my manager, helped me navigate the industry. At Buddah Records, he found songwriters who could highlight my voice, such as Van McCoy, who wrote "This Is It" for me. Later, I worked with Philadelphia International Records producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff and the songwriting duo McFadden & Whitehead, who produced "A Portrait of Melba."

I started with an awkward soprano high voice and was finally building my vocal strength. Because I practiced continuously, I had incredible breath control. One day, I was working on a song, and one of these high notes popped out and carried across the room. I said, "Oh, my goodness, where did that come from?" I kept holding the note and realized it was me making the sound. Then, I kept doing it to see if I could repeat it, and I was able to add this unique skill to my repertoire.

When Gene McFadden wrote the song "Falling," we incorporated this vocalization. Not only did the song become noteworthy for my vocal dynamics—including a high note that I held for nearly 20 seconds, ranking among the longest sustained notes in recorded pop music—but "Falling" also peaked at No. 1 on Billboard's Hot R&B Singles chart for one week.

Chic Compass: Let's talk about your Broadway career. You were in the cast of "Hair." How did you land that role?

Melba Moore: Back in the 1960s,



Above from Left: Sheryl Aronson, David Josef, Melba Moore, and Daniel Forrester, photo by Sasaphotos

I met Valerie Simpson, and we started chatting and exchanging numbers. Valerie told me she was a backup singer for jingles and other recording sessions. She later invited me to become a backup singer as well.

Along the way, I was invited to participate in Galt MacDermot's recording sessions, the composer and band director of "Hair." He recorded his version of all the music, assisted by Gerome Ragni and James Rado, who wrote the book and lyrics. The sessions lasted about two weeks.

When the sessions ended, Gerry and Jim invited everyone from the recordings to sing for the director and producers of "Hair." They had promised to find parts for us. After hearing the recordings, the director and producers were very impressed with everyone, but I was the only one who went on to join the show. Thankfully, the director and producer liked me, and I got the part despite having no acting experience. They

were looking for interesting personalities, and the director thought I had one! We were told we'd be trained for the roles.

Chic Compass: Then you played the Tony Award-winning role of Lutiebelle in "Purlie."

Melba Moore: (Melba laughs and admits) Everybody thought I was a great actress, but I based the character of Lutiebelle on my nanny who raised me. She had been an orphan and an illiterate domestic worker. I copied her accent and mannerisms. When I tried out for "Purlie," I didn't have an agent. After "Hair" was over, I started looking around for something else to do. I didn't know how to audition for theater roles, but my friend advised me not to worry and to audition anyway. After this experience, I was on the map—it threw me into television, film and the music industry.



Chic Compass: You've been nominated four times for a Grammy Award and have created 28 albums. What has this meant to your career?

Melba Moore: The nominations have established me as a successful recording artist, yet I've had to overcome many challenges in my career. I felt very honored when my cover of Aretha Franklin's song "Lean on Me" was nominated for a Grammy. I've always worked very hard to develop my style. Over time, the music business has changed many times, and I've had to evolve with it. Now, the business is primarily small, independent artists who figure out how to grow on their own.

Chic Compass: You're primarily a New Yorker and love performing in the city. Talk about what

New York has meant to you over the years.

Melba Moore: I'm a New Yorker at heart. I was very smart to stay in New York for cultural and spiritual reasons. I love the way that New York City is so multidimensional and multicultural. I have such a great team on my side promoting my career.

My latest album, "Imagine," was produced by my daughter's record label and is connecting me with the next generation. It came out in 2023 and has 12 songs. I first released two songs: "So in Love," which spent three weeks atop the UK Soul Top 30 chart, and then we released "Take Me Away." I feel that now I have full control over how I market myself. In the past, record companies sometimes took advantage of artists. There's interest in creative

projects for me because of the release of "Imagine" with incredible people like Richard Russell wanting to send me songs and working with Brenda Russell. She's a New Yorker, too.

Chic Compass: Speaking of New York, I enjoyed seeing you perform last October at a sold-out house at 54 Below. What did it mean to you to perform at that illustrious venue?

Melba Moore: It's extremely exciting to experience a solo cabaret show at this point in my career. I came up with the concept myself and wrote the script for the show. Honestly, I would have preferred having a skilled writer do it, but there wasn't time. I didn't know if it would work, but the show must go on!

Chic Compass: You did a great job! The audience loved your performance. Now, I also want to congratulate you on receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Of course, you wore a David Josef designer outfit. First, talk about getting that star.

Melba Moore: Fortunately, my manager, Ron Richardson, focused on different areas of my career that were very substantive. He had been working on this project for a couple of years, but I had so much on my plate that I wasn't thinking about the true meaning of getting the star. Once it became a reality and he explained the meaning to me, I felt overwhelmed with gratitude. It was a culmination and recognition of the many years of hard work. I thought to myself, 'I'm now permanent here.'

Chic Compass: You've had such a vibrant, successful and versatile career. This honor was well deserved. Now, talk about David and the special outfits

he creates for your shows and awards ceremonies.

Melba Moore: Everything that David has made is a one-of-a-kind outfit. He's developed a way of styling me so that when people see me, they say, 'OMG, look how great she looks.' That's the art of being a great designer. The design doesn't overshadow me. He's an artist and extremely creative. I love the incredible fabrics, and his capes are ridiculously stunning. He knows what the fabric will do to the natural eye on the stage and at a distance when the colored lights hit them. They take on a whole life of their own.

Chic Compass: You wear all the outfits like a queen.

Melba Moore: David helps me bring my train off the cape so I can turn around and flop it onstage or on the red carpet—wherever I wear one of his special designs.

Chic Compass: In January, you performed with the fabulous Kenny Lattimore in the gospel show "Heavenbound" in Los Angeles. What was that like?

Melba Moore: I didn't do an acting role. Don B. Welch, the show's producer, invited me to sing two songs. I was excited, however, to be working with Kenny Lattimore. Here's what's interesting, though ... one of the things that saved me when my career crashed was that I went on my first gospel musical tour.

I had lost everything and was homeless. Michael Matthews, the godfather of gospel music theater, cast me in his production. I left just in time to avoid being evicted from my apartment. I became a born-again Christian. I didn't have an address or a bank account. I got paid in cash and saved \$7,000 at the end



of the first week. After two years of being on tour with the show, I could afford a high-rise apartment just off the Hudson River on the Jersey side. From that experience, I do my business differently now.

Chic Compass: I love that story because many people don't understand how much an artist can struggle. You reinvented yourself from your struggles.

Melba Moore: Michael calling me and putting me in his show was God's blessing. I didn't know anything about gospel plays. They were starting to become a form of theater around the country. That's why I can still look forward to having a future in this industry, even though I've already been in it for 50 years.

Chic Compass: This brings us to

the conclusion of the interview. What has it meant to you to be in the business all these years, and what can your fans expect as you move forward?

Melba Moore: I still have glamour, wisdom, health and a calendar of shows. Maybe I can show others what they, too, could look forward to in life. I will write a book and do some documentaries so I can document from my own perspective what my life and career have been. I don't want to work as hard and want to be more selective. But in the end, keep it moving.



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Photo by Andy Hangerman

FLECHA CANTINA

MARK WAHLBERG EXPANDS HIS LAS VEGAS EMPIRE

By Stacey Gualandi and JJ Snyder / Photography courtesy of Flecha Cantina

"Right now, everything is about longevity."

Mark Wahlberg is focused on the long game. Not just on the golf course, but in his extensive entertainment career, ever-expanding entrepreneurial empire, and endless exercise routines.

"I got up today at 2:30 this morning," boasts the 53-year-old former rapper-turned-actor-turned-investor.

The notorious early riser has work-outs to complete, films to shoot, businesses to buy, and restaurants to open—like the over 10,000-square-foot Flecha Cantina by Mark Wahlberg.

This is his second "Mexican redefined" restaurant and the latest venture in his newly adopted home of Las Vegas.

"When I came, I wanted to make sure that I was bringing something to the table," says Wahlberg. "I've made two films here already and put a lot of money into the economy. Everything we do is based on quality, whether it be the gym experience, the studio experience, film, television, or restaurants. We want



Above: Mark Wahlberg speaks at the Flecha Cantina by Mark Wahlberg grand opening



Above: Wahlberg ribbon-cutting surrounded by Clark County Commissioner Michael Naft, friends and the Flecha Cantina team

to bring something to the community and create jobs and opportunities."

Wahlberg is referring to his recent announcements that he plans to build a Sony Entertainment movie studio and a luxury fitness space called Municipal Gym, inspired by his Municipal athletic clothing line—two projects that will surely secure his foothold in Sin City.

"I've had many, many failures, but those are the most valuable experiences," says Wahlberg. "If you're always winning, you don't pay attention. You get super comfortable, and it's through the hardships and the mistakes that I've made that are invaluable as far as learning and then making sure, most importantly, that I'm in business with the right people."

Chic Compass contributors Stacey Gualandi and JJ Snyder got a prime table with the Flecha Cantina team:

Mark Wahlberg, managing partner and co-founder Randy Sharpe, and chef Cristhian Salazar at the recent grand opening and talked tequila, salsa temperature, and why everything is good on ice.

Stacey Gualandi: After premiering Flecha Cantina in Huntington Beach, it didn't take long to launch a sequel here in Las Vegas!

Mark Wahlberg: Of course, because it's my home. It's my backyard. I live 15 minutes away from here. We're here as often as possible, and it's nice because my family comes, we hang out, and we come to brunch. It's nice because it's Vegas, but it's geared toward the community and the locals versus on the Strip, where it's much more of a tourist attraction, which I like.

JJ Snyder: Flecha is between Summerlin and Henderson, but it's not far from the Strip.

Mark Wahlberg: No, it's not! So, we're hoping that people will come

and see us, and then eventually, we'll probably put something further down the Strip. But for us, the first time being part of the community and catering to the locals was very exciting for us.

Stacey Gualandi: Why did it make sense for you, Randy, to partner up with Mark and to be a part of this particular project?

Randy Sharpe: Well, obviously, having a partner like Mark is pretty special...

Mark Wahlberg: ...There are pros and cons as we go. Ha!

Randy Sharpe: No, there haven't been any cons yet, except when you almost have a fire in the restaurant. But as long as we put it out, we were okay. I've probably had a hundred fires in my life in restaurants; that's the only one that kept me on the phone all day long!

Stacey Gualandi: Well, isn't that good publicity?



Above: Stacey and JJ with managing partner and co-founder Randy Sharpe, Mark Wahlberg, Chef Cristhian Salazar and Sarah Jenkins. Photo by Timothy Hancock

Mark Wahlberg: I mean, look, it's brought a lot of awareness to the restaurant. No pun intended, but we're the hottest restaurant in the world right now. Ha!

Randy Sharp: The most important thing for us is that we're trying to build a business focused on quality, family, and everything Mark and we believe in. To be a great business partner, you have to be available. Mark is always available for us when we need advice. It works

better than I ever thought, and I've been doing this for 30 years.

Mark Wahlberg: I also want people to understand that this is not just a celebrity restaurant. I was smart enough and savvy enough to partner with great chefs and great operators, the people who are serious adults in this space—which is why we're successful. It's really about what they're creating and what we're creating together as a partnership. I want to make sure that

we give them the opportunity to talk about the food, the experience, and the things that they're providing. I obviously wouldn't be successful and wouldn't be in business if it wasn't for them.

JJ Snyder: I like that you're catering to families with the Sunday brunch, but then it's not just Taco Tuesday—it's tacos and tequila! Everyone universally—whether you drink or not—loves happy hour. You gotta have a good one.

Chef Cristhian Salazar: We have a \$5 happy hour for lunch and a regular happy hour with our famous street tacos, queso fundido, and ceviche. It's really good. Our Micheladas and our famous margaritas are there.

Stacey Gualandi: Do those margaritas include your Flecha Azul tequila?

Mark Wahlberg: It's an important part, but we're serving many other tequila brands. We even carry my friend Kevin Hart's tequila. He also had a cocktail on the menu, which



Flecha Cantina grand opening



I wasn't sure about at first because we were in competition. But we're very supportive. We want to make sure that we have whatever the customer wants. If they're interested in what additive-free premium tequila's supposed to taste like, we encourage them to try Flecha.

JJ Snyder: Personal question on the food angle. Salsa: mild, medium, or hot, and why?

Mark Wahlberg: Medium, personally, especially because I've been eating so strictly that once you open that box up, it's hard to stop. I just ate a giant bowl of chips, so I'm

trying to save room for some of my favorite items on the menu.

Stacey Gualandi: Is that why you announced your new luxury gym, to work off all the chips?

Mark Wahlberg: It's going to be called Municipal Gym. There's fitness and recovery, but a big emphasis on recovery and rejuvenation therapy. We're going to have treatments that you have never seen in Vegas.

It's much easier to stay in shape than get in shape, and some people have been training the wrong way.

I want to teach people and share my experience. I've had to learn the hard way with all the aches, pains, and injuries I've had while making movies. Sharing that with others can help them avoid those mistakes and, more importantly, start earlier. You know, a lot of people have a lot of excuses. There are a million reasons why they might not want to go to the gym or why they prioritize other things.

It's about finding one good reason to prioritize your health, wellness, mental, physical, and spiritual health. It's also about finding balance while still being able to enjoy life. The healthier the lifestyle and the balance, the better you feel. Eat right, exercise, celebrate victories, go out and have fun, enjoy cheat meals—but then get back on your training again.

JJ Snyder: We're very excited about Municipal Gym. I love that it focuses on luxury fitness and recovery, which isn't emphasized much. Stacey and I work out together, and we're about to do a liver cleanse, which involves something trendy: intermittent fasting.

Mark Wahlberg: Which I do often.

JJ Snyder: For those of our readers who have never tried cryotherapy—submersing themselves in ice—what's that about? Why is it valuable? It sounds crazy.

Mark Wahlberg: I start every day by getting in the cold tub for four to six minutes. That reduces all the inflammation and gets my endorphins going. I have this dopamine rush for, I don't know, three or four hours. I feel no pain or aches in the gym working out.

People in my life have been pushing



Above: Wahlberg with his Flecha Cantina staff

me to try it for quite some time. I was always old school: I'd eat too much protein, lift too much weight, and never take time off. I always thought if you're taking a day off, you're missing out. But recovery is just as important—if not more so—right now.

Eighty-five percent of fitness is nutrition, 15 percent is exercise, and recovery is a huge part of it. I'm training to be around for a while, be able to move and function, and do the things I've wanted to do with my kids for as long as possible.

JJ Snyder: Speaking of kids, your youngest daughter, Grace, is an equestrian. I grew up with horses as well. Are you enjoying the Old West aspect of the Las Vegas Valley? There's a lot of history here.

Mark Wahlberg: Absolutely. It's been very cool. We've got a lot of stuff happening, and my whole life now revolves around being an equestrian dad. She's 14 years old!

To have the discipline—it took me until my 40s to become that disciplined, and she's doing it at 14 and doing it full time. It's incredible.

And the best thing about it is when we go to a competition, people will say, "She's a great jumper, she's a great rider, but she's an even nicer person." That's the most important thing. [Grace] does all the little stuff herself. She's not too important to go and shovel horse poop, clean, and groom the horses. She's doing everything, but she's also kind and respectful to everybody she



encounters. That's the thing I'm most proud of.

Stacey Gualandi: Everything you do is a family affair. So, last question: Will you attend the new Las Vegas residency this summer called "New Kids on the Block: The Right Stuff?"

Mark Wahlberg: Ha! I'm gonna take [my friend Mikey] over there to see the concert... [But] every time I go, they'll start playing "Good Vibrations." Somebody will hand me a microphone and keep trying to get me up [on stage].

JJ and Stacey: Yesssssss!

Mark Wahlberg: I haven't done it yet. We'll figure out when the right time is. I'm excited that my brother is going to be here in Vegas. It's always good to catch up with him and connect.

JJ and Stacey: And it's always terrific to catch up and connect with you! Thanks, Team Flecha!

Below: Fumar Cigars and Flecha Cantina collaborated for the grand opening to make custom-branded Flecha hand-rolled cigars available for guests.

hope

THE LAS VEGAS SINFONIETTA A NEW CLASSICAL BATON IN TOWN

By Kendall Hardin | Photography courtesy of the Las Vegas Sinfonietta

The new kid on the local musical block is the Las Vegas Sinfonietta (LVS), a professional chamber orchestra founded by a passionate group of local musicians who perform extraordinary classical repertoire ranging from Baroque to contemporary works.

Since its founding six years ago in 2019, the chamber orchestra has delivered nearly 50 performances throughout the Las Vegas Valley. The Sinfonietta has grown to 30 members, all accomplished musicians in their own right, who pursue parallel careers as principals or section leaders of nationally recognized orchestras, as eminent chamber musicians or as master teachers of music.

The chamber orchestra strives to attain the highest standards in performing an array of classical repertoire for diverse audiences while regularly featuring outstanding soloists and guest conductors. As part of its active performance and touring schedule, the Sinfonietta has partnered with



many other musical organizations, such as the Vegas City Opera, the Las Vegas Master Singers, the UNLV Chamber Chorale, the Southern Nevada Musical Arts Society and the Las Vegas Academy.

At the center of this musical hubbub is the founding artistic director and conductor, Taras Krysa. The Ukrainian-born, American-based conductor has established a reputation for

Above: The Las Vegas Sinfonietta in concert with the Southern Nevada Musical Arts Society

innovative and inspiring music-making throughout the United States and Europe. Krysa was appointed in 2016 as the music director and conductor of the Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra, the oldest professional orchestra in Ukraine, and serves as UNLV's director of orchestras since moving to Las Vegas in 2006.



Above: Taras Krysa conducts the Sinfonietta

Born in Kyiv into a dynasty of professional musicians, Krysa was destined to become a distinguished violinist and conductor. His father, Oleh Krysa, is a prominent concert violinist, while his mother, Tatiana Tchekina, was a concert pianist. His grandfather, Pavel Tchekin, was a tenor at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

Krysa attended the Gnesin School of Music in Moscow before emigrating with his family to the United States in 1989. There, he continued his studies in conducting and violin at Indiana University and Northwestern University. He also received a prestigious fellowship to the American Academy of Conducting at the Aspen Music Festival.

His conducting and performance credits are far too long to list. Still,

music lovers will note his work with esteemed groups, such as the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, the New World Symphony, the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, the Spoleto Festival USA Chamber Orchestra, the St. Louis Orchestra, the Lublin Philharmonic Orchestra and the Las Vegas Philharmonic. In addition, he led the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, the Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra and the Slovak Sinfonietta Chamber Orchestra on several European and Asian tours.

Locally, Krysa played a critical role in developing the Henderson Symphony Orchestra in Nevada as its music director for nearly a decade. Under his leadership, the ensemble's audience expanded tenfold, and its concerts became a treasured part of the cultural life of

Las Vegas. The Las Vegas Sinfonietta now marks an important new chapter in his career—one that aims to further expand and enhance the musical landscape throughout the Las Vegas Valley.

Chic Compass: Now that the Las Vegas Sinfonietta has been established, how do you see it developing over the next decade?

Taras Krysa: We wanted to play chamber music, so we “morphed out of madness.” We began to perform informally. As we grew, we pieced together the organizational structure of the board, administration and funding support. We've kept our core values and high-quality programming over the last five years and created a unique musical energy that attracts audiences who respect our work.

We're intent on filling a void in the city with a relatively unknown classical chamber repertoire in our town. We want to continue in that direction by challenging our musicians and audiences. I can see us expanding our educational reach into the schools, working collaboratively with other musical organizations and perhaps creating “edgier” cross-over programming with elements of jazz and rock, and even touring in the long run. All this will take additional logistics, funding and boots on the ground.

Chic Compass: What's it like to be a Ukrainian-born, American-based conductor with one foot in Europe and another in the States, especially here in Las Vegas?

Taras Krysa: The logistics of working on two continents are brutal and exhausting these days, given tough travel logistics and the full-time demands of artistic direction. Of course,

the opportunities and challenges afforded me have enriched my career. I'm now focusing more of my time in Las Vegas, as the Sinfonietta is a major venture for me.

Chic Compass: How do you approach conducting and artistic direction with the Sinfonietta, especially as an accomplished violinist?

Taras Krysa: We have several constituencies. First, our duty is to honor the will of the composer, so the conductor has to do due diligence and work on interpretation. The second group involves the musicians who bring the music to life with each other in trust with the conductor. The third constituency, of course, is the audience. We have to make critical choices in choosing composers, repertoire and performance venues that engage our audiences.

Mind you, highly skilled musicians have their own strong opinions as well. It's a little like a democracy. The musicians entrust the conductor to lead, not as a dictator, but



Above: Violinist Nataliya Karachentseva performs Vivaldi's "Concert for Four Violins"

Below: Concert Master Alex Dzyubinsky

as a trusted ally and collaborator. Everything we do has to serve these three constituencies. The challenge here in America is how arts organizations are funded primarily through philanthropy rather than government

funding, as is the embedded tradition in Europe. Ticket prices alone can't sustain the Sinfonietta.

As we grow the Sinfonietta by developing new funding sources and hands-on support, we can't give in to a lack of artistic vision or political will.

Chic Compass: What do you share with students who want to be conductors?

Taras Krysa: I tell them I don't do it (laughter). Conducting is a very peculiar profession. It requires a lot of time, perseverance and inner strength. You don't have an instrument at your disposal; you have to summon a live orchestra to practice your skills. You have to take a lot of



criticism and rarely get feedback.

Most of what you learn is from accumulated experience acquired after you leave school with basic skills. Basically, you have to learn how to manage people, with all the differences in ages, cultures, egos and experiences. It helps to have a gifted, seasoned conductor as a mentor. Plus, you have to develop an ear for orchestration and love music. The good news is that we all want to play music, so we work at getting along to produce the best artistic outcome we can create together!

Chic Compass: What are your thoughts about what's happening today in Ukraine with the country's musicians and treasured orchestras?

Taras Krysa: Ukraine is a country where young democracy has taken place just over the last 25 years. I have observed a split between the younger generation, which embraces Western ideals, and the older generation, conditioned under Soviet rule, who doesn't trust losing power. To see all of this while working in Ukraine is fascinating, and then come back to the States and witness the current polarization in our own country. It's a great learning experience. Russia's horrific aggression must be stopped, not only for Ukraine but for all of Europe and the West.

Las Vegas Sinfonietta

Taras Krysa, Artistic Director
Alex Dzyubinsky, Concert Master
Gabriella Benavidez, Media

For more information on the Las Vegas Sinfonietta and upcoming events, visit www.lasvegassinfonietta.com.



Above: Taras Krysa comments during the "Violins of Hope" concert commemorating those lost in the Holocaust

Below: Sinfonietta members Dmitri Kourka on the viola and Tyler Gordon on the bass



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ONE GLASSY ACT

ARTISTRY, LOVE FORGED IN GLASS

By Brian G. Thornton / Photography courtesy of Domsky Glass

Like molten glass and hammered metal, this story mirrors the resilience and artistry of Barbara and Larry Domsky's relationship. It's a true privilege to share their journey and work—one that's deeply personal to me, having collaborated with the studio firsthand. Their artistry has continually enriched my design projects, and this piece aims to spotlight what makes them both so extraordinary.

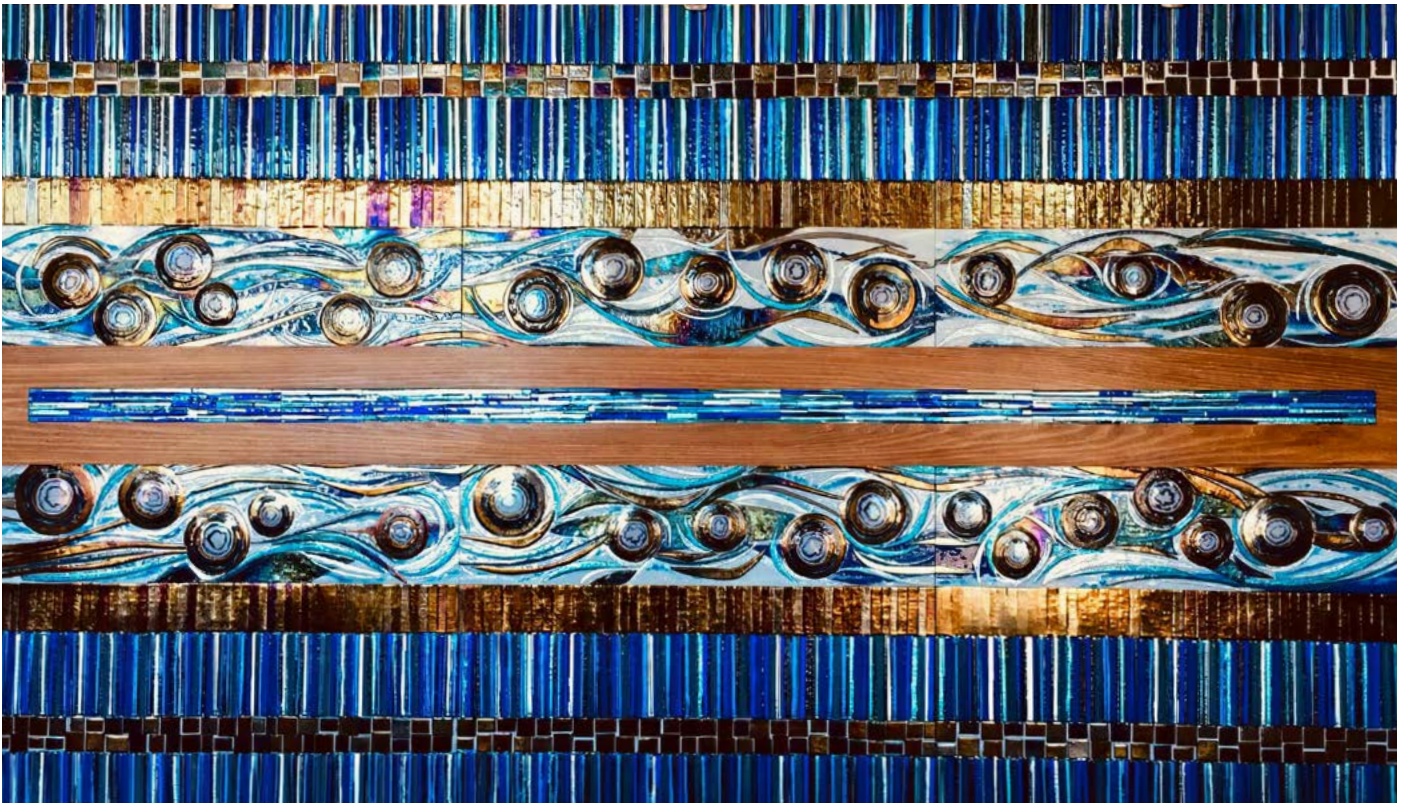
The Spark of Creation

Meet Barbara and Larry Domsky, local artists who have been married for more than 30 years and are now collaborators and business owners. A tour of their gallery and studio, Domsky Glass, on Highland Drive in Las Vegas, immediately begins with the story of two artists in love and sharing their love of their craft.

Larry begins: "Growing up in a creative environment, I was inspired by my father, a restaurateur in Philadelphia, who took me to work and museums, sparking my love for art. My first experience with glass came in high school through



Above: Barbara and Larry Domsky "Our sole intention is to put good thoughts and positive energy into the world. We hope that our artwork will uplift and inspire those who experience it."



a stained-glass project, followed by a visit to Wheaton Village, where I saw blown glass for the first time and was captivated by the molten energy.

"At 19, I moved to Las Vegas, worked as a stagehand and trained in metalworking at the MGM scenery shop. There, I learned that if I could dream it, I could build it. Later, I met Barbara, a designer at a glass studio. We discovered our shared passion for creating and began teaching ourselves to work with fused and hot glass, collaborating on projects that combined glass and metal."

Barbara adds, "I was exposed at an early age to other countries, and now, as an adult, I still remember the textures, patterns and colors of each region I experienced. South Africa entirely influenced my early panels and bowls in glass. I had such a love for the textiles and weavings of that country. They inspired my 'Basket Bowl' and 'African Blankets' series,

mimicking the vibrant colors, patterns and textiles of South Africa. My early years of glass making became a learning experience, allowing me to master the challenging techniques of large paneled, fused glass work and develop my style as a glass artist. I think of that series as my roots and my current contemporary work as my wings."

The Fusion of Materials and Souls

"Larry and I met in our late 20s through a large circle of mutual friends, and over time, we became close. We shared a love of nature and often spent weekends hiking the trails of Mount Charleston or Red Rock. We exchanged creative ideas for hours on those hikes and dreamed about the art we wanted to create.

"Our first collaboration opportunity came around 1990 when a community church commissioned us to build

Above: Glass and wood panel composition titled "Tranquility" 120" x 66" created for a Las Vegas residential master bedroom

a 14-foot butterfly sculpture in glass and metal. We loved the experience of working together and the satisfaction of creating large-scale art. Inspired by that project, we began investing in equipment and teaching ourselves the art of glassmaking.

"In 1994, we got married. With Larry's encouragement, I left the studio where I had been working to pursue my own artistic path. Within a year, we had secured enough commissions for Larry to leave his job as well. We took the leap and opened our first studio together, beginning to build our business.

"We shared so many similar interests and first became the best of friends. Our relationship evolved naturally, though Larry will tell you that on our first date, he shared his vision of us getting married and becoming



Above: Fused, dichroic glass, wall panels, each with a 30" diameter

full-time artists, working together in our own studio. I remember when he told me this—despite it being our first date, after months of friendship—I could also see that future for us. It felt like destiny that we found each other."

The Beauty of Collaboration

Barbara says: "Collaboration is at the heart of our process, and rule number one is simple: no egos. Success begins with listening closely to the client's needs and understanding the space. Larry and I brainstorm by exchanging ideas—first through conversation, then through sketches. Once we find the right concept, we refine it into a scaled design for the client's review, ensuring the final piece reflects our creative synergy and their vision.

"People often ask how we balance work, creativity and our personal lives. For us, it's natural. We spend every day together and wouldn't have it any other way. We do bring work home—sketching and discussing projects—but we also carve out time to step away and let our brains breathe.

"When our visions don't align, we



reflect, reviewing the project thoughtfully considering the space, lighting, and how the art will be experienced. With time and careful conversation, we always arrive at a solution that best serves the client and the space."

Illuminating Las Vegas and Beyond

Over 30 years, their work, craftsmanship, innovation, and storytelling through art have expanded across mediums, scales, and genres.

When asked if their approach to art and design had evolved since they first started, they responded: "Absolutely, yes. We have grown immensely as artists. We have challenged ourselves to evolve and so has our work. Over the years, we've maintained a balance of creating large-scale projects for hospitality, residential and public art. With each commission, we push ourselves to create something new and different. This constant evolution has been key to our growth as artists, helping us develop our creativity and skill."

Barbara and Larry reflect on two pivotal turning points in their career. "The first was our work with Mandalay Bay and the opening of Reflections Gallery, which marked the beginning of our international sales," Barbara shares. "The second



came when we received commissions from the Department of Aviation to create two massive 90-foot glass and metal sculptures for Harry Reid International Airport. That project, the largest we had ever undertaken, was a five-year journey and a career milestone. It opened doors to more large-scale opportunities."

Both are driven by a desire to create art that inspires. "We're motivated to make the world more beautiful and to uplift others, especially through public art," Larry explains. "Residential projects are particularly meaningful for us, as they offer a personal connection with the client. It's rewarding to create something that resonates deeply with someone's taste and lifestyle."

"We've always tailored our art to each project—whether it's a gallery piece, a public installation or residential art," Barbara adds. "While gallery work reflects personal expression, commissioned work—especially in public spaces—must engage a broader audience, staying neutral yet uplifting. On the other hand, residential commissions allow us to reflect the client's unique style, making each piece feel personal and meaningful."

Legacy in Light and Metal

"Since our first year in business in 1994, Larry and I have connected with our community, particularly through supporting art programs for children with cancer. This involvement grew organically. With each opportunity, we became more committed to being part of the solution by raising funds for pediatric cancer care. Along the way, we've found our tribe of compassionate, like-minded individuals who genuinely care about the well-being of others. We are continually inspired by how our small efforts contribute to making a positive change in our community.

"Over the years, we've learned to switch gears quickly. Each opportunity brings new challenges and solutions. We both find it thrilling to work on so many unique projects. However, we remain focused on one project at a time, ensuring that each receives the attention it deserves. Effective scheduling and clear timelines are essential to maintaining high quality while managing multiple projects with varied demands. That and strong coffee!"

When asked about their favorite installations, Barbara responded: "Our pieces 'Sunset Mirage' and 'Cloud 9' at Harry Reid International Airport hold a special place for us. We're always thrilled to receive photos from people who have taken pictures in front of them, it never fails to make us smile. Those commissions truly proved to us that we could successfully create large-scale projects. And here's a little secret I'll share with you: on the backside of the glass sun center, we engrave the names of everyone we love, friends and family, along with a blessing for them all. We then fire it into the glass to remain a part of the sculpture forever.

Barbara continues: "Glass is the most



Above: Utah residential "Welcome Blanket" series. Each fused glass panel is 41"x41" in size and created from hot-glass cane work and dichroic glass.

incredible medium. Its ability to transition from solid to liquid and back to solid, constantly transforming in shape and color, is truly remarkable. It's the most challenging medium to master, yet the most rewarding when it takes the desired form. The visual depth it offers in art and the brilliance of its color is unparalleled. Glass requires light to reveal its beauty fully. The ever-changing reflections of color make it feel as though it has a life of its own. Larry has a unique ability

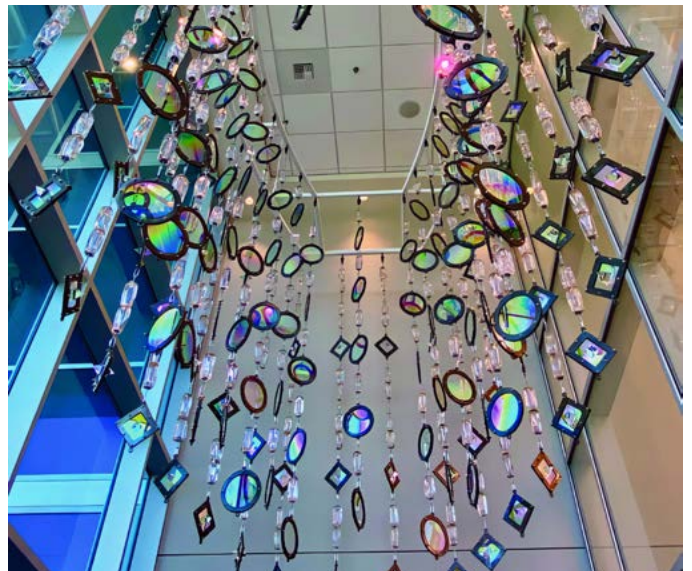
Images on facing page:

Top: "Cloud 9" installation at Harry Reid International Airport

Middle: "Sunset" installation at Harry Reid International Airport

Bottom Right: Detail view of suspended sculpture titled "Equal Justice for All" commissioned by City of Las Vegas for the Las Vegas Municipal Courthouse / overall size 24' x 17' x 12' created from blown glass, dichroic glass, metal and crystal prisms

Bottom Left: Custom light feature for Las Vegas penthouse. Created from blown glass beads, dichroic glass and metal fabrication. Overall (approx.) 46" x 25"





Above: Four metal sculpture composition titled “Larger than Life” commissioned by the City of Las Vegas for Symphony Park. Each sculpture stands over 11’ tall.

to work with metal, not just to support the glass but to enhance the art piece, adding beauty and character. His metalwork seamlessly complements the glass. His craftsmanship is amazing!

"We are both deeply grateful to this community for every opportunity we've been given and for the support of our studio and gallery from locals and tourists. To have created artwork that will endure for years to come, enjoyed by millions of visitors and locals, is an incredible honor for us as artists. On a personal level, we truly feel connected to this community. Our contributions come with no personal intent other than to help and see our community thrive. That said, Larry and I have found immense joy in witnessing the difference we can make—seeing children beat cancer and grow up to thrive. Our involvement and contributions have been a blessing in our lives."

Their community commitment is transparent. "Our sole intention is to put good thoughts and positive energy into the world. We hope that our artwork will uplift and inspire those who experience it. First and foremost, we

hope that those who know us will recognize our genuine intent to be kind and compassionate people. Through our art and involvement in this community, we have strived to make a difference for the children and families of Las Vegas. As for our legacy as artists, Larry and I have had lifelong careers in Las Vegas built on the incredible opportunities this city has given us. We've created art for many of the Strip's hotels, buildings, and public spaces. We hope our journey inspires and encourages other artists to navigate this challenging path. Ultimately, we wish for our legacy and art to uplift others and spread positive thoughts and good energy for many years.

"Throughout our 30-year career, we have mentored, shared, and given back. As we move into the final years of our careers, we believe our best art is yet to come. To achieve this, we know it will require a deep focus on the work itself."

Looking ahead, Domsky Glass has a bright outlook. "We have an exciting year ahead, with a large hospitality project and several residential commissions lined up for 2025. Dallas-based developer Jackson-Shaw has commissioned Domsky Glass to create a signature sculpture at their new AC Hotel by Marriott/Element

by Westin in Symphony Park. The Las Vegas hotel will receive a 16-foot sculptural element currently in design. With the many beautiful contemporary homes being built in Las Vegas, we're eager to meet with these families to create unique art pieces that reflect their personal style and taste. We hope they will be inspired to contact us, visit our facility, and tour our studio to explore our art firsthand. Larry and I wake up inspired and eager to create every day, driven by our deep love for making art. The excitement of each new opportunity fuels our passion and creativity. Every commission brings fresh inspiration, and we hope we've also inspired others along the way."

In the world of glass and metal, the Domsyks are truly "one glassy act"—a seamless blend of artistry, passion, and precision. Their creative partnership is more than just a collaboration; it's a shared vision that turns molten materials into lasting masterpieces. With every piece, they continue to elevate art and inspire those who experience it, proving that together they're unstoppable.

Gallery and studio tours of Domsky Glass are available by appointment. For more information, visit www.domskyglass.com.



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THE NEVADA CHILDHOOD CANCER FOUNDATION: AN ARK OF LOVE AND HEALING IN THE DESERT

By Elaine Harris

Hearing the dreaded words from their health care provider that their child has cancer is one of the most devastating moments a family can face. It often catapults them into a tumultuous new world filled with extensive medical testing, emotional turmoil, and financial challenges. How does a family or individual navigate such life-altering circumstances?"

I recently met with one individual who provided answers to my questions. He, too, had cancer many years ago but has since transformed his life into a testament to healing by supporting families in Nevada who are facing the greatest challenges of their lives.

This extraordinary individual is Jeffrey Gordon, president and CEO of the Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation (NVCCF). The nonprofit organization recently celebrated 31 years since its inception. Through supportive, multifaceted programs, NVCCF provides a bright ray of hope.



Above: Jeffrey Gordon, president and CEO of the Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation (NVCCF). Photo by Elaine Harris

NVCCF was founded in 1993 by Dr. Ronald Oseas, the first pediatric oncologist/hematologist in Las Vegas. It was established in response to the needs of suffering families and their critically ill children. Dr. Oseas realized that families needed far more than medical help. With the aid of other concerned caregivers, he spearheaded NVCCF by creating emotional, financial, social, educational, and psychological support services and programs.

Gordon joined several years later and has remained dedicated to providing support, love, and comfort to families and their children.

When I met Gordon, I was struck by his gleaming smile and effervescent energy—qualities that reflect the compassion of someone who has endured life's challenges. Gordon exudes a sense of purpose and integrity, which have helped transform NVCCF into an organization known for excellence and heartfelt care.

Chic Compass: How did you meet Dr. Ronald Oseas, NVCCF's founder? How did your role evolve within the foundation?

Jeffrey Gordon: I met Dr. Oseas late in 1996 through a pharmacist friend, Scot Silber, who worked with him. They started the Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation. Dr. Oseas moved to Las Vegas, quickly realizing that his patients needed more than just medical care. He brought together a couple of families to support one another, eventually forming a board and developing plans for the foundation.

I was invited to attend a board meeting, thinking they would ask me to join. At the time, I had just sold an outdoor advertising agency I'd been running here in Las Vegas.



Above: Photo of the Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation Britney Spears Campus by Sonia Miller of Sure Wave Media

They asked me about my plans, and I said, 'I didn't know.' Then I suggested, 'Let's ask these families what they need.' That was the beginning of my involvement.

I was given a small room to contact families at Dr. Oseas' office. I asked them, 'If there were one thing an agency or organization could do for you, what would that be?' I received so many different answers that I knew we had to get busy.

They were already hosting Camp Cartwheel for children and their families. It was held at Mount Potosi for a weekend at a Boy Scouts camp. They had also been hosting a fundraising dinner, which I thought could be improved in certain areas, so I began building from there. We started with one program at a time—whether it was for education or psychological counseling. The most significant concern, however, was financial.

I quickly discovered that although many families had insurance, it only covered the tip of the iceberg.

I had the unique experience of going through cancer. I eventually became the executive director, as we needed someone full-time to oversee these programs. I had come to love these children and families, and

when the board asked me to be the director, I gladly accepted. We started a financial emergency fund, which is what we called it in the beginning. It has grown into more than 40 programs and services that we offer to these families, not just to a child diagnosed with cancer.

Dr. Oseas also addressed sickle cell, autoimmune disorders, and blood-related diseases, which we were happy to support, as we were among the first organizations to help those with sickle cell and all blood- and immune-related diseases.

As we built the organization, we developed Project A.R.K. (Aids & Resources for Kids), an extensive network of licensed and caring professionals who provide services to families of children diagnosed with life-threatening and chronic illnesses who live in or receive treatment in Southern Nevada.

Our care team meets with the families and conducts an assessment. We evaluate where they are financially, emotionally, psychologically and educationally—all the areas where we can help. At that moment,

they become part of our family. We embrace and love each other and support each other. That is simply our purpose here.

Chic Compass: Can you tell me about NVCCF's adult services program, The Caring Place, and how it evolved?

Jeffrey Gordon: That's a rather personal story. When I was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin's lymphoma, the prognosis was not good. Dr. Mary Ann Allison is someone I will love forever, as she helped save my life. She was wonderful and cared for so many people in this community. Dr. Allison has since retired.

As I was finishing my treatment, she mentioned to me that she had always dreamed of creating a place for adults affected by cancer. She even had a name for it: The Caring Place. I explained that she needed

501(c)(3) nonprofit status and insurance. I helped her with that, and she found a location. We started sending some of our parents and some patients to The Caring Place for healing arts. It became an oasis of healing in the desert, offering counseling, massage, reiki, yoga, and art therapy services.

One day in 2009, during the economic downturn, Dr. Allison called and said they were experiencing financial struggles. She asked if there was any way we could save The Caring Place and if I could speak with our board. I worked to secure financing and lock it in for a few years. Our friend and developer Brett Torino helped us, along with some funding from the wonderful Engelstad Foundation.

Years later, we met Britney Spears through her manager. She was in the process of moving to Las Vegas

and beginning her residency at Planet Hollywood. She wanted to support a children's charity. Her advisors planned to interview 10 charities; we were one of the organizations mentioned through the mayor's office. Britney was not involved in the initial process.

It was a Friday when our wonderful vice president and director of marketing, Stephanie Parker, had 30 minutes to present to Britney's representatives. However, the meeting lasted two hours because of the many questions they had. The following Monday, Britney selected us as her charity. She raised more than \$1 million for our organization.

In 2017, we opened the Britney Spears Campus, which was made possible through her generous donation. The campus, located at 3711 E. Sunset Road, allows all of NVCCF's services for children, families and adults, including The Caring Place, to operate in one location, supporting them as they deal with the psychological, medical and social ramifications of cancer.

Chic Compass: How do you engage community awareness of NVCCF and The Caring Place? Is it through social media, public service announcements, and fundraising?

Jeffrey Gordon: We host many events. We have our Saddle Up for Kids event in the spring, and in the fall, we have the Profiles of Courage Gala. The gala is one of our biggest fundraisers each year, honoring special children of courage, volunteers, and community angels. We also honor those who help us as we help others, along with the courage of several brave children and adults.

Stephanie does an incredible job with grant writing. It is important to



note that we are not affiliated with any national organization or receive government aid. We are a local charity, which is reassuring for those who donate to us, as they know all the money goes to local programs. Ninety cents of every dollar goes directly to the programs, and we have been very transparent about that throughout the years.

Chic Compass: It sounds like you have a group of extraordinary individuals who have supported your mission. Is there a particular individual or group of individuals who have walked alongside you that you would like to mention?

Jeffrey Gordon: There are so many, but there are some special ones, with Brett Torino probably being one who has done as much or more than anyone for NVCCF. I had not been doing this for more than a month when FOX5 Vegas contacted me for an interview as a new startup, and Brett, a developer in town, was being interviewed right after me. Right before his interview, he introduced himself and asked me to wait for him because he wanted to discuss possibly doing some projects together. That began a friendship and brotherhood combining two hearts that have never ceased.



Whenever I needed anything, Brett was there, especially for the education program. Since our kids were missing so much school and needed assistance to maintain their education, I explained the program, and he funded it and continues to fund it. It is now known as the Brett Torino Foundation Education Services. Whenever I asked him for something, he was always there.

For example, Camp Cartwheel needed a larger facility. Brett had a beautiful ranch and opened it to NVCCF, developing it over the years to accommodate our kids and many others in our community. Various construction companies have also

helped us tremendously—what a giving industry. The PENTA Building Group, SW Specialty Contractors, and McCarthy Building Companies are like family to us.

Al Marquis and our tremendous board of directors have been there for us. Rich and Claire MacDonald at MacDonald Ranch opened their clubhouse for our Saddle Up for Kids event. Garry Goett at Southern Highlands has also funded many children's trips to camp over the years.

This community is full of wonderful people with giving hearts. Many outstanding individuals want to work here or sit on our board, but this is the real deal. We have always said to check egos at the door. These children know within two minutes if you are a caring individual. We are careful about who is involved in benefiting these special adults, children, and their families.

For more information, visit www.nvccf.org.

Above and Left: Photos of 2023 Camp Cartwheel participants by Sonia Miller of Sure Wave Media





A GOLDEN NIGHT TO REMEMBER

By Janet Susan R. Nepales / Photography by Gerry Villaroman

It was a memorable night at the Golden Globes as Hollywood's A-listers gathered at The Beverly Hilton for the 82nd annual ceremony, often touted as Hollywood's "Party of the Year."

Nicole Kidman, Angelina Jolie, Viola Davis, Zendaya, Ariana Grande, Timothée Chalamet, Selena Gomez, Dwayne Johnson and sisters Elle and Dakota Fanning were just a few of the stars who strutted on the red carpet, sipped mini Moët champagne bottles and blew kisses to their fans.

Glen Powell and Timothée Chalamet were particularly excited to meet their look-alike winners—fans who attended the Globes after winning contests because of their uncanny resemblance to these celebrities. The look-alikes proudly held signs that

read, "I won a look-alike contest and now I am at the Golden Globes."

The "Wicked" ladies — Ariana Grande, Cynthia Erivo and Michelle Yeoh — stunned in their outfits for the night. Grande wore a vintage haute couture nude off-shoulder gown by Givenchy. Erivo dazzled in a custom black Louis Vuitton halter gown adorned with silver sequin floral embellishments and a voluminous waist. Yeoh, meanwhile, was elegant in a black high-neck gown by Balenciaga.

One of the evening's most emotional moments came from Zoe Saldana, who won her first Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actress for "Emilia Pérez." Saldana delivered a heartfelt tribute to her collaborators, celebrating the power of diverse storytelling. Through tears, she said, "My heart is

Above: The cast and crew of "Wicked" backstage with the press. The movie received the Best Cinematic and Box Office Achievement award at the Golden Globes.

full of gratitude. Thank you so much to the Golden Globes for celebrating our film and honoring the women of 'Emilia Pérez.' I'm so blessed to share this moment with Selena Gomez, Karla Sofía Gascón, director Jacques Audiard, and all of my fellow nominees."

"Emilia Pérez" also won awards for Best Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy, Best Motion Picture (Non-English Language), and Best Original Song for "El Mal," which Saldana performed in the film.

Gascón, who delivered a powerful speech to close the night, made



Above: Tadanobu Asano of "Shogun"

history as the first transgender woman nominated for Best Actress in a film at the Golden Globes.

Dressed in a yellow and orange Saint Laurent gown, Gascón said, "I chose these colors—the Buddhist colors—tonight because I have a message for you: The light always wins over darkness. You can maybe put us in jail. You can beat us up, but you can never take away our soul, our existence, our identity. And I want to say to you, raise your voice and say, 'I am who I am, not who you want.'"

At the viewing party, where the winners had their trophies engraved, the victors walked in ecstatically with their Golden Globe awards. Ali Wong, wearing a red dress, won Best Performance in a Stand-up Comedy on Television for "Ali Wong: Single Lady."

Colin Farrell, in a white suit, excitedly shook hands with guests who congratulated him on winning Best



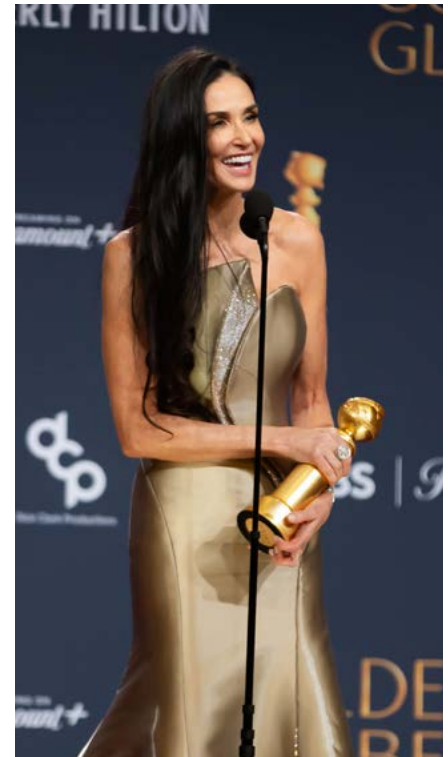
Above: Hiroyuki Sanada of "Shogun"

Performance by a Male Actor in a Limited Series for "The Penguin."

It was also a big night for "Shogun," as its entire nominated cast took home trophies: Hiroyuki Sanada (Best Performance by a Male Actor in a Television Series, Drama), Anna Sawai (Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Series, Drama), and Tadanobu Asano (Best Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role on Television). The show also won Best Television Series, Drama.

While Sawai and Asano showed excitement backstage and in the media room by raising their trophies, Sanada remained calm and collected—just like his character in the show. All three actors were first-time Golden Globe winners.

Another first-time winner was Fernanda Torres, the first Brazilian to win Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Motion Picture, Drama, for "I'm Still Here." Torres exclaimed



Above: Demi Moore of "The Substance"

that Brazil was celebrating with her that night and dedicated her award to her actress mother, Fernanda Montenegro, the last Brazilian nominee in that category 25 years ago.

Sebastian Stan, who won Best Actor in a Musical or Comedy for "A Different Man," used his speech to advocate for empathy and inclusion. He also highlighted his other important film, "The Apprentice."

"Our ignorance and discomfort around disability and disfigurement has to end now," Stan said. "We have to normalize it and continue to expose ourselves and our children to it, encouraging acceptance. One way we can do that is by championing inclusive stories."

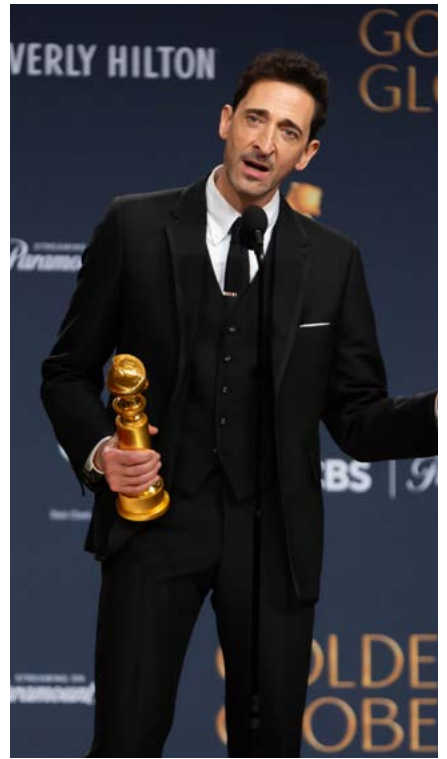
Richard Gadd, the "Baby Reindeer" actor-writer-producer, accepted the Golden Globe for Best Television Limited Series, Anthology Series or Motion Picture Made for Television for his show. He stated, "We need stories that speak to the complicated



Above: Colin Farrell of "The Penguin"



Above: Fernanda Torres of "I'm Still Here"



Above: Adrien Brody of "The Brutalist"



Above: Karla Sofía Gascón



Above: Timothée Chalamet and Glen Powell look-alike contest winners



and difficult nature of our times. Any story, when done right, is universal. All the weird, idiosyncratic struggles we go through daily are just as worthy of being committed to the screen."

Jean Smart, 73, won her second Golden Globe for her role in "Hacks," teasing, "I never thought I'd be so happy to be called a hack!" The show also won Best Television Series, Musical or Comedy.

Jodie Foster, 62, claimed her fifth Golden Globe, winning Best Actor in a Limited Series for "True Detective: Night Country." After being teased by actress Sofía Vergara, who was also nominated in the same category for "Griselda," Foster replied, "I know. I know."

Foster began her speech by saying, "The greatest thing about being this age and being in this time is having a community of all these people, especially you, Sofía." She also thanked "the Indigenous people who share their stories with us. They have changed my life. Hopefully, they will change yours."

Above: The cast and crew of "Baby Reindeer" meet the press backstage. The show won the Best Television Limited Series, Anthology Series or Motion Picture Made for Television award at the Golden Globes.

Below: Jodie Foster





Above: The cast of "Shogun" meet the press backstage. The show won the Best Television Series, Drama at the Golden Globes.

Adrien Brody, another first-time Golden Globe winner, won Best Actor, Drama for "The Brutalist," which also claimed Best Motion Picture, Drama. His director, Brady Corbet, won the Best Director award, marking his first Golden Globe win.

Brody, 51, became emotional during his speech, thanking his partner, Georgina Chapman, the former wife of Harvey Weinstein. "For your generosity of spirit, your own resilience, your immense creativity as a daily reminder of how to be," he said.

Finally, one of the evening's highlights was Demi Moore's powerful and moving speech. The 62-year-old actress, elegantly dressed in a champagne gold Giorgio Armani Privé gown, revealed, "I've been doing this a long time—over 45

years—and this is the first time I have ever won anything as an actor. I am just so humbled and so grateful.

"Thirty years ago, I had a producer tell me that I was a 'popcorn actress.' At that time, I made that mean

I wasn't someone who could be acknowledged. I bought in, and I believed that."

This Golden Globe night proved that producer wrong, Demi.



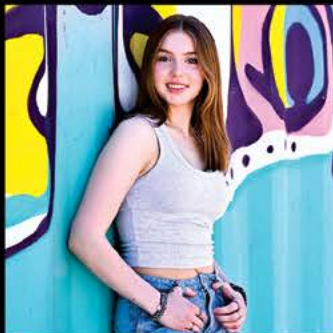
Above: Elle Fanning, who stars in "A Complete Unknown" with Timothée Chalamet, greets her fans at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards

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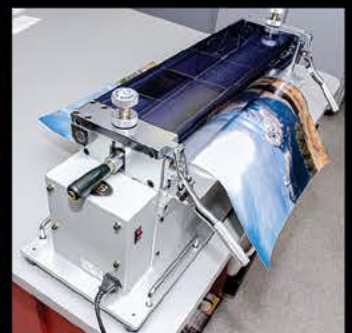
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FOR THE LOVE OF HORSES

HORSE RESCUE CEO ALICE WHITFIELD ON A LOVE STORY 53 YEARS IN THE MAKING

By Stacey Gualandi / Photography courtesy of HAV Horse Rescue

It's feeding time at the HAV Horse Rescue barn in Las Vegas, but that doesn't keep CEO Alice Whitfield from singing to her stable.

She bursts out her rendition of "Side by Side" as Casper, a 17-year-old Quarter Horse and retired barrel racer, continues inhaling a handful of hay.

"I have my repertoire, and I sing to all of them," says Whitfield. "But when it comes to food, I take second place."

Always quick with a quip, this feisty five-foot (15 hands in horse lingo) force of nature—with her signature lime-colored hair—never puts her cart before the horse.

But don't let her small size fool you. This former Broadway singer and actress is a thoroughbred in saving and rehoming surrendered horses.

"Lilac was bones when she came here and wouldn't go near anybody," says Whitfield as she introduces her hungry herd one by one.



Above: Annie at the HAV Horse Rescue. Photo by Sölus1 Photography Group



Left: Moneda

Left Middle: Ginger

Left Bottom: Sundance

"She's now up to weight and somebody is sponsoring to adopt her."

"Joe was a racehorse who had kissing spine disease that had to be operated on," adds Whitfield. "Instead of being put down, we took him in. Now he's absolutely perfect and being ridden."

Then, there's little orphan Annie, the horse who inspired this 15-acre 501(c)(3) nonprofit in Kyle Canyon.

"She was just 333 pounds," says Whitfield. "Now she's up to 1,000 pounds and a spoiled brat! Ha!"

With support from volunteers, generous donors and an expert team in place, HAV Horse Rescue has built a horse's dream house in just two short years.

"This is the Ritz Carlton of horse rescues," says part-time volunteer Ellen LaPenna, who heard about HAV Horse Rescue on the local news. "I bonded with Willy. He's my love. Now I'm his financial sponsor."

"I just pray that people do get the word and that it'll become self-supporting," says Whitfield of her charity. "We have turned horses and people's lives around for the better."

The "we" is she and her partner-in-equine, husband David Hammer. He was instrumental in making his horse-worshipping wife's bucket list wish a reality.

"We want to take in horses that need to be surrendered due to a family crisis, financial difficulties, an inability to care for a horse and the need for



medical intervention," says Hammer. "For horses that aren't adoptable, they get to live out their time in our sanctuary with all the love, attention and medical care they could ever want."

"[Horses] will come right up and sniff you and they'll find out if you're naughty or nice," adds Whitfield. "You don't pick them. They pick you."

Decades ago, this devoted duo picked each other as teens growing up in Brooklyn, New York.

"We were sweethearts in ninth grade until our senior year in high school," gushes Whitfield. "I was in love and that was it. There was nobody else for me."

But Whitfield says Hammer's "Daddy dearest" put pressure on his son to go to college, not to go steady, so her beloved boyfriend broke it off.

"He was a dutiful son and left me with a bag of Chinese food on Ocean Avenue in Brooklyn. Not that I remember it. It was a Sunday," jokes Whitfield. "I never got over it. It killed me. I never stopped crying."

Hammer says they did meet up in Brooklyn once more a short time later.

"I was going into the train station to go to school and she informed me that she was getting married," says Hammer. "That put a kind of a finality to the whole thing, so we just went off to what became our own incredible lives."

Whitfield earned two doctorates—one in English and the other in primate animal behavior—both of which went unused in favor of the Great White Way.



Above: A resident of the HAV Horse Rescue barn in North Las Vegas

In a twist of fate, she was asked to be one of the original cast members of the acclaimed 1968 Off-Broadway show "Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris."

Her "perfect pitch" and versatile vocals earned her fame in both New York and Chicago, and an invitation to perform her one-woman show at Carnegie Hall.

But Whitfield says she soured on show business.

"When I decided to leave the business, my father was ready to kill me," says Whitfield. "He said, 'How could you do this to me?' He liked having a daughter who was famous. I was pretty famous and successful, but gosh, did I hate show business!"

Her streak of success continued as a New York City ad agency director/writer/producer, which led to coaching and casting voice actors. She worked with and befriended such legends as Dick Van Dyke, Tony Randall, William H. Macy, Nathan Lane and Mary Tyler Moore, to

name but a few.

Whitfield opened her own company, Real-To-Reel Recording, Inc., which became one of Manhattan's top creative production houses, and was recognized as one of the top voiceover coaches in the country, all while raising her son Mitchell.

(Fun fact: Mitchell Whitfield followed in his mom's famous footsteps with memorable roles like Stan in "My Cousin Vinny" and Rachel's ex-fiance Barry the orthodontist in "Friends!")

Meanwhile, Hammer, a widower with two children, had moved to Taiwan and became a hugely successful international businessman.

"He spent 38 years building an empire, never being able to speak a word of Taiwanese; a word of Chinese; a word of anything other than English and a couple of Jewish phrases here and there," jokes Whitfield. "But he turned nothing into a 1.2 million-square-foot furniture factory."

Throughout the years, Whitfield admits she never stopped thinking of—and trying to locate—her long-lost love. Promising leads, even one from a private detective, always led to dead ends.

The story of her decades-long search is a complicated one, but in 2013, Alice Whitfield (née Berman) finally got an email address for Hammer through the help of old high school friends. She contacted him immediately.

"I looked at this email and said to myself, 'Do I remember Alice Berman?'" recalls Hammer. "Are you fucking kidding me?"

From then on, they emailed each other every day, which Hammer says, "mushroomed into over a hundred email trails, back and forth and back and forth."

"Then came that one special email," adds Whitfield, who was by now living in Las Vegas and teaching voice-over classes at UNLV.

Hammer invited her to meet him in Hawaii for a Midwood High School reunion...for two.

"So, there I was on the way to Oahu, sitting in the aisle seat near the bathroom because all I could do was run and pee," laughs Whitfield. "A woman next to me asked, 'Are you all right?' No, I'm not. I'm meeting the love of my life, who I haven't seen in 53 years!"

That first face-to-face is a moment they will never forget.

"He didn't do anything; he just stood there," says Whitfield. "Then he said, 'Alice Berman?' I said, 'Yes, David Hammer.' Then, all of a sudden, he grabbed me and kissed me, and that was that."

Since then, they haven't stopped making up for lost time, which includes a family of three goats, two horses, two dogs and 38 rescued horses, at last count.

"The number keeps on changing," jokes Hammer.

Many adoptable horses at HAV Horse Rescue have healed and found forever homes, and dozens of families have written letters raving about how perfectly matched they are to their new horses.

The bottom line is that Whitfield credits its success so far to a talented team led by ranch managers

and COO Sharon and Tommy McGarry, trainer Erica Manke and a large group of volunteers.

Once the veterinarians properly care for a surrendered horse's medical issues, Sharon determines which ones are ready for rehoming. But before any horse is released, she visits the potential new owners' home and facility to make sure it is suitable.

"This is an opportunity of a lifetime for me," says McGarry while holding back tears. "HAV Horse Rescue has a serious purpose and has really been put together to last and to get it right. It's all a gift; it's good for the horses, and once people come,



Above: Alice Whitfield and David Hammer

they want to be part of us.”

That includes one veteran named Orlando. Whitfield says he would lock himself in his house and never talk to anyone until he started coming to the HAV Horse Rescue.

“He comes up and just takes care of the horses, plays with them and he’s a new person. He leaves his house!” says Whitfield. “That’s the power that these animals have. Grace, to me, is the connection between a human being and, let’s face it, an animal.”

Right now, everyone is chomping at the bit for Phase Two to be completed. Whitfield says—for the first time in Las Vegas—there will be a state-of-the-art equine rehabilitation center at HAV Horse Rescue!

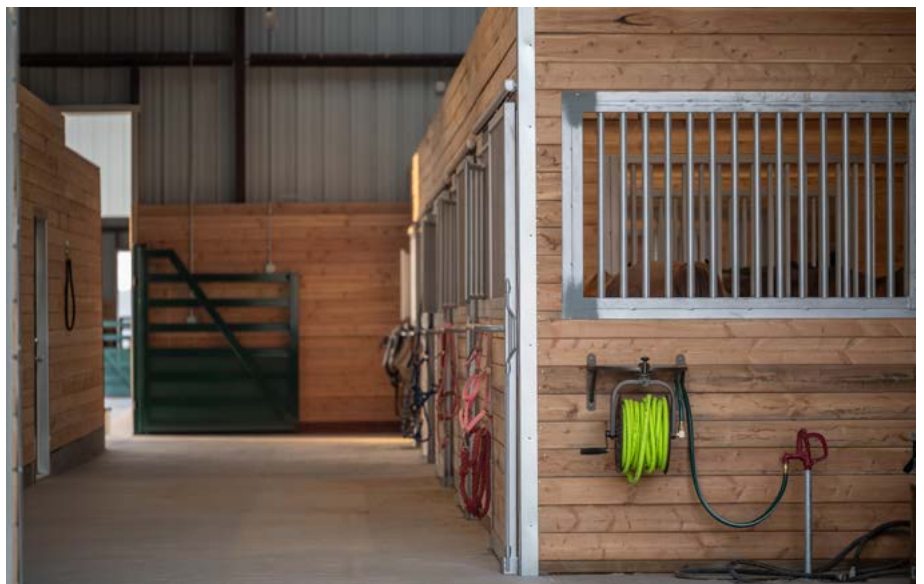
“No more hauling your horses to another state,” says Whitfield. “We’re building already. We don’t waste time.”

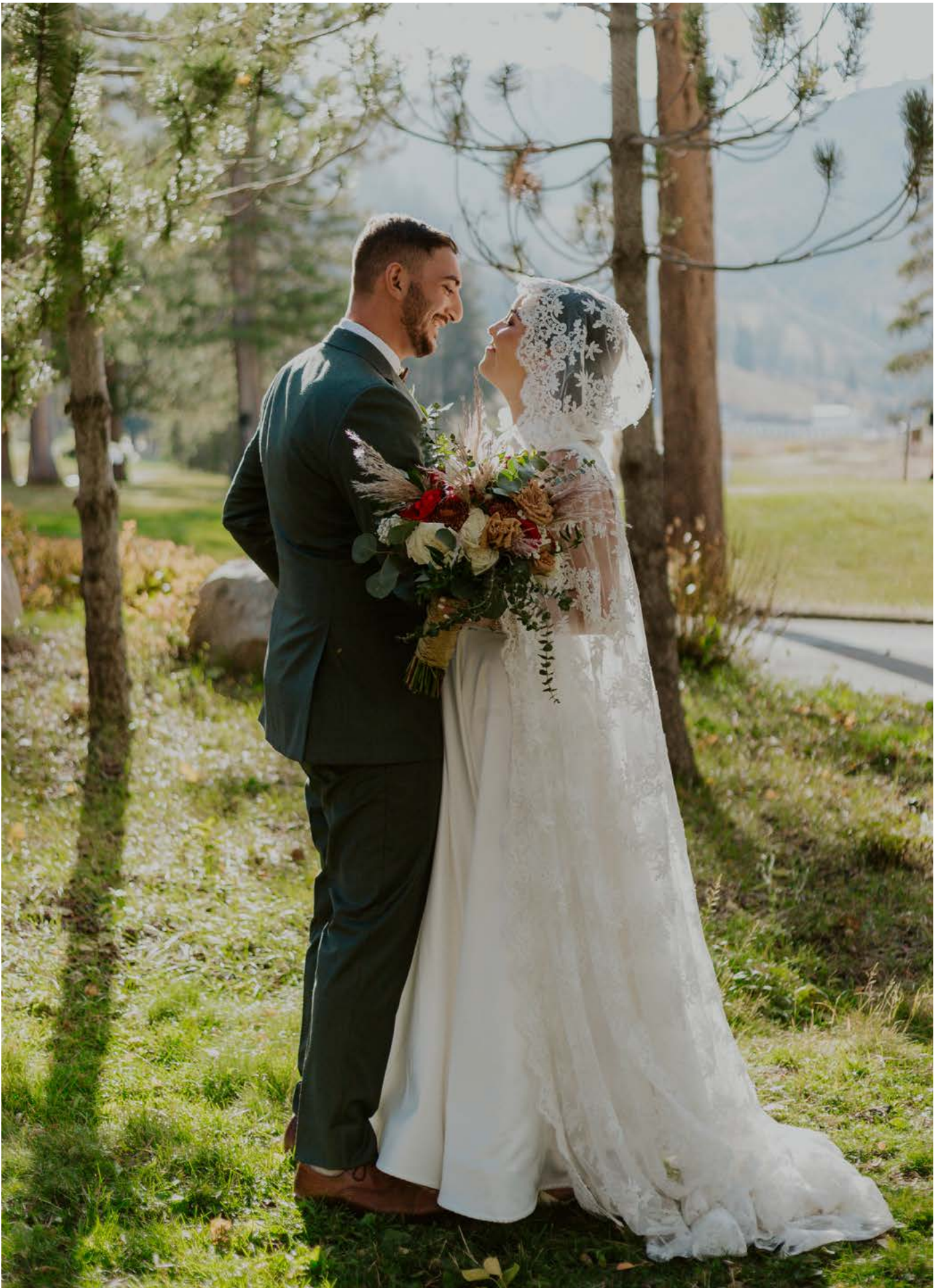
After five decades apart, not wasting time makes perfect sense. That is, horse sense.

“I’m not a religious person, but there’s no doubt in my mind that there’s some fate involved here, some extraterrestrial thing out there that put us back together again,” says Hammer. “Of course, it would not have happened had Alice not pursued it.”

“And he’s been making it up to me ever since,” adds Whitfield. “We have Chinese food once a week. Ha!”

To learn more about how to help and get involved, visit www.havhorserescue.org.





A FAIRY TALE WEDDING FOR DADDY'S PRINCESS

By Jeff Guest

Photography by Jasmine John Photography and Susie Magit

Every father dreams of his daughter someday meeting her Prince Charming and giving her a magical wedding fit for a fairy tale. Shaina Guest met Brandon Shamieh during their first year at the University of Nevada, Reno. They dated throughout college but took a few years apart when she relocated to Virginia for a job.

But fairy-tale love is strong, and she soon found herself back in Nevada, then near his home in Northern California, rekindling love's flame. Eventually, he proposed, and Daddy's dream became a reality.

They were married on a gorgeous fall afternoon on the grounds of the beautiful Everline Resort & Spa in Lake Tahoe, California. The impending sunset, "God rays" lighting, and mountain backdrop combined to create a magical motif worthy of such a joyous occasion.

She wore a wedding gown specially created according to her wishes by renowned fashion designer David Tupaz. The dress, made from Italian Peau de Soie satin, was intentionally simple yet elegant to accentuate the bride's beauty. The cape and hood, made from Venetian lace

with glittered glass beading, added an element of whimsical fantasy, which, combined with the dress, evoked the imagery of a princess in an enchanted forest.

A dinner reception followed in the Everline ballroom, kicked off by traditional Arabic drummers and punctuated by a song sung by the bride and her parents. A not-so-traditional breakout portion of the father-daughter dance followed. All in all, it was a day and night to remember.

But isn't that the point? Weddings are much more than just an excuse for a party. They're a moment frozen indelibly in the memory of everyone who participated in or witnessed the blessed event.

Even though she's married and living "happily ever after," she will always be her Gram's special granddaughter and her mother's darling daughter. But to me, she will always be Daddy's princess.

Glam: Vanessa Saldana

Hair: Lillian Glover

Florist: Candlelight and Roses









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SUBTERRANEAN SPLENDOR THE UNDERGROUND MANSION IS A HISTORIC HIDDEN GEM

By Stacey Gualandi / Photography by Kandid Lifestyle Photography





As a frequent visitor to Las Vegas for decades and a resident for 11 years, I'm proud of my vast knowledge of all things vintage Vegas.

So, imagine my surprise when I learned only recently that a 50-year-old nuclear fallout shelter—better known as the Underground Mansion—is just three miles from the Strip!

Lo and behold, hidden directly below an unassuming two-story home is truly a sunken treasure.

"They've left the 1980s property [above] as is to hide the secret of the gem underneath," says Frankie Lewis, the director of events and business development, also known as the historical caretaker. "The Underground Mansion is one of the most unique places on Earth."

It's not open for tours, but Lewis says very few people have been allowed to enter the space.

"It's ultra-exclusive and secretive, and that brings its own allure to many."

A few of those in on the secret include hometown heroes Imagine Dragons (who shot their "Monday" music video here), the cast of "Jersey Shore," Blue Man Group, Cirque du Soleil, Atlas Obscura, and international photographers from around the globe. (I mean, where else can you find a better bunker as a backdrop?)

But for the less famous who are fortunate enough—including yours

Left: The Underground Mansion's stunning features include a pool, artificial trees, and hand-painted murals that depict lifelike scenery

truly—to follow a "Fallout Shelter" sign deep down a stairwell (or an optional elevator), it feels like you're literally taking a step back in time.

More than two dozen feet below the surface is a luxurious 16,000-square-foot Cold War-era compound with a three-bedroom, four-bath mansion, a casita, a fireplace, and a wet bar, all surrounded by an artificially landscaped front and back yard. The amenities include a barbecue grill, a disco dance floor, a four-hole putting green, a pool, a hot tub, and even a cave.

Oh, and did I mention the retro Barbie-pink kitchen?

"I love taking photos of guests in the pink kitchen," says Lewis. "All but one of the life-size faux trees conceal 12-inch-by-12-inch structural steel beams, and it's pretty special to have an underground pool where we can host a pool party any time of year."

Throughout the sprawling space, there's also a billiard room and

a blackjack table, approximately 1,000 fluorescent bulbs (in four colors) that allow for day and night simulation, including sunrise and sunset; black lights that illuminate glow-in-the-dark mural features; and twinkling lights on the 12-foot-high ceilings—just in case you forgot you're in Las Vegas.

"It gives you the feeling of being outside," says Lewis. "People have told me, 'Oh, I can't go down there. I'm claustrophobic.' Well, you'd probably be more claustrophobic in your own home than here!"

For a bomb shelter, it sure is fully equipped to host an epic blowout.

While the Historic Tour program is on hold until the county finishes its zoning process, Lewis says the Underground Mansion is a picture-perfect event venue.

"Events range from small private parties to large corporate events for up to 200 guests," says Lewis. "We have live bands, DJs, showgirls, mermaids, high-end chefs and caterers,

full bar services, and many other options."

The mansion also hosts music videos, movie productions, influencers, and TV shows.

So, what exactly is a nuclear shelter like this doing in a no-nonsense neighborhood?

Lewis says Girard "Jerry" Henderson, a successful entrepreneur, philanthropist, and Avon Products director, built the below-ground bunker to be the last private residence for him and his wife, Mary.

During the 1960s, Henderson became fascinated with the groundbreaking concept of bunker homes and the architect Jay Swayze, who designed the first safe, private, and viable "Atomitat" (a combination of "atomic" and "habitat") in Texas.

Henderson contracted his first Swayze-designed underground home at his ranch in Colorado in 1961.







"Then Jerry funded the construction of the Underground World Home exhibit at the 1964–65 New York World's Fair," says Lewis. (The original brochures from the World's Fair are on display in the Underground Mansion, alongside other historic memorabilia).

It wasn't until 1974 that he broke (under) ground off Flamingo Road, a project that eventually took four years to complete.

"There were only five Atomitats ever built," says Lewis. "Henderson funded three of the five homes, and this is the last accessible one."

One of the most fascinating features of the Las Vegas location is the well-preserved wall murals painted meticulously by Texas artist Jewel Smith.

The murals represent just five of Henderson's numerous properties around the world: upstate New York, New Zealand, Mulholland Drive/Hollywood Hills, the Swiss Alps, and the Colorado Rockies.

Another item of note—sadly no longer on display—was the spectacular necklace from the film "Cleopatra," framed with a letter from Elizabeth Taylor to Mary Henderson, the actress's former hairdresser.

Lewis isn't a caretaker by trade. In fact, she owned a software company that educated medical professionals on medical devices. But seven years ago, she got a random chance to go 26 feet underground.

"I went into the underground and have been helping there ever since."

During that time, Lewis says she studied Henderson's family history, mission, and the Alexander Dawson Foundation, which Henderson





created in 1957 to give students access to the highest-quality education in the United States.

"My heart is preserving Jerry's legacy and this special historic property. It has so much potential for educational and historical value," says Lewis. "So, as long as I can have people continue to support it in a positive way and respect the property, then I feel like my mission is well underway."

Over the past decade, the mansion was listed multiple times for \$5.9 million to \$18 million but was taken off the market in February 2024.

Lewis now hopes the 50-year-old Underground Mansion will someday receive historic status with help from the Nevada Preservation Foundation (NPF).

For the second year in a row, this May, the NPF will offer a rare opportunity to take a guided tour of the mansion on the Underground Celebrity Icons of Las Vegas Bus Tour during the Heritage Tourism Festival Home + History Las Vegas event.

"This particular project is fundraising for them, but it's also exposure for us," says Lewis. "It's helping us also shed light on the history of the property with people who care about the history of Las Vegas."

Later this year, the Underground Mansion will be included in the new travel guide "111 Places in Las Vegas You Must Not Miss" by Mackenzie Jervis, with photography by Kaitlyn Kelsey.

To further celebrate the mansion's 50th milestone this year, Lewis says they're expanding their community services.

"We support school field trips, fundraising events for local charities, and tours for families of terminally ill kids," says Lewis. "After every event, any leftover food is quickly repackaged, labeled, and donated to local homeless shelters for teens."

Thanks to Lewis, this landmark's legacy lives on.

But ultimately, if she has her way, this submerged sanctuary is one secret that won't remain underground.

"I dream that a group or persons who care about Vegas history will continue to preserve it," says Lewis.

"Then, I want to pass the baton to someone younger who would carry on that legacy so that when I move on, I'll know it's still being protected."

For inquiries about hosting a private event at the Underground Mansion, email frankie Vegas underground@gmail.com or call 702-706-6962.



Marty Morawski and Stacey Gualandi at the Underground Mansion



*“Love is space and
time measured by
the heart.”*

— Marcel Proust



DALE MATHIS

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DALE MATHIS

ART THAT MOVES THE WORLD

By Laura Henkel

In the ever-evolving world of contemporary art, few artists master the balance between form and meaning as seamlessly as Dale Mathis. From his humble beginnings at the Arts Factory in Las Vegas to site-specific installations across the globe, his artistic journey is a testament to his dedication to form and meaning. His kinetic sculptures don't just move—they invite introspection, bridging the mechanical and emotional to create art that feels alive.

Kinetic sculpture refers to three-dimensional artwork that incorporates movement as an essential element of its design. This movement can be powered by natural forces like wind and water, mechanical systems like gears and motors, or viewer interaction. Unlike static sculptures, kinetic pieces invite audiences to engage with dynamic and evolving works, offering a mesmerizing fusion of engineering and artistic expression.

Wes Myles Isbutt, founder of the Arts Factory and a prominent collector, underscores the universal appeal of Mathis' work:

Dale is truly a world-class artist. His work resonates universally—every person who walks through our doors is immediately captivated by it. There's a unique value in his art that speaks to everyone. Dale's ability to envision and flawlessly execute



his concepts sets him apart. Unlike a painting that can be reworked, his creations must come together perfectly from the start—there's no margin for error. And when they do, the result is nothing short of spectacular.

The Evolution of an Artist

As a child, Mathis was captivated by the intricate process of assembling model cars, planes, and sci-fi replicas from "Star Wars." This fascination soon evolved into creating his versions of model spaceships by repurposing parts from other kits—a practice now known as "kitbashing."

Later in life, a serendipitous commission marked his entry into kinetic art.

Above: Pistons, gears, and constant motion, all mixed up, give Dale Mathis the whole inspiration to create sculptures with a lot of meaning

A client requested a custom desk, and Mathis proposed including gears as a visual reference. The client asked if the gears could be functional and agreed to pay extra for this feature. That moment changed the course of his career, igniting his passion for creating art that moves both physically and emotionally. He was living in his studio, working construction, barely making enough money to buy a slice of pizza or a hot dog.

During this time, Mathis began to hone his craft in Las Vegas as part

of the art collective Five Finger Miscount (5FM). Known for their underground shows, which included graffiti, 5FM played a pivotal role in the cultural explosion of underground hip-hop and graffiti art and helped launch the Las Vegas Arts District in the 1990s. Members included Mathis, Emmett Gates (also known as Iceberg Slick), KD Matheson, Dray, and Mear One, all of whom continue to create magnificent work today.

Gates, now an acclaimed filmmaker and serves as curator of M Modern Gallery in Palm Springs, is currently producing "5ive Finger Miscount," a documentary film highlighting the group's origin and their contributions that significantly shaped the Las Vegas Arts District into what it is today. This film will follow his documentary, "Across the Tracks: A Las Vegas Westside Story," which features the unknown history of Black creatives and innovators of the 1950s, such as architect Paul Revere Williams, who positively impacted the lives of all. Per Gates:

From Dale's humble beginnings to traveling globally to connect with collectors and corporations to make site-specific works of art, Mathis calls Las Vegas home. He remains real, continually innovating and always inspiring. My favorite thing about Dale is that you could put him and one of his works in a room together, and very few people would pick him out of a lineup as the creator. His physical size automatically makes him intimidating until you take the time to meet and speak to him and find out he's a teddy bear. This juxtaposition between his commanding physicality and gentle nature mirrors the profound contrasts in his work—mechanical complexity paired with emotional depth.

Kinetic Sculptures: Marrying Mechanics and Emotion

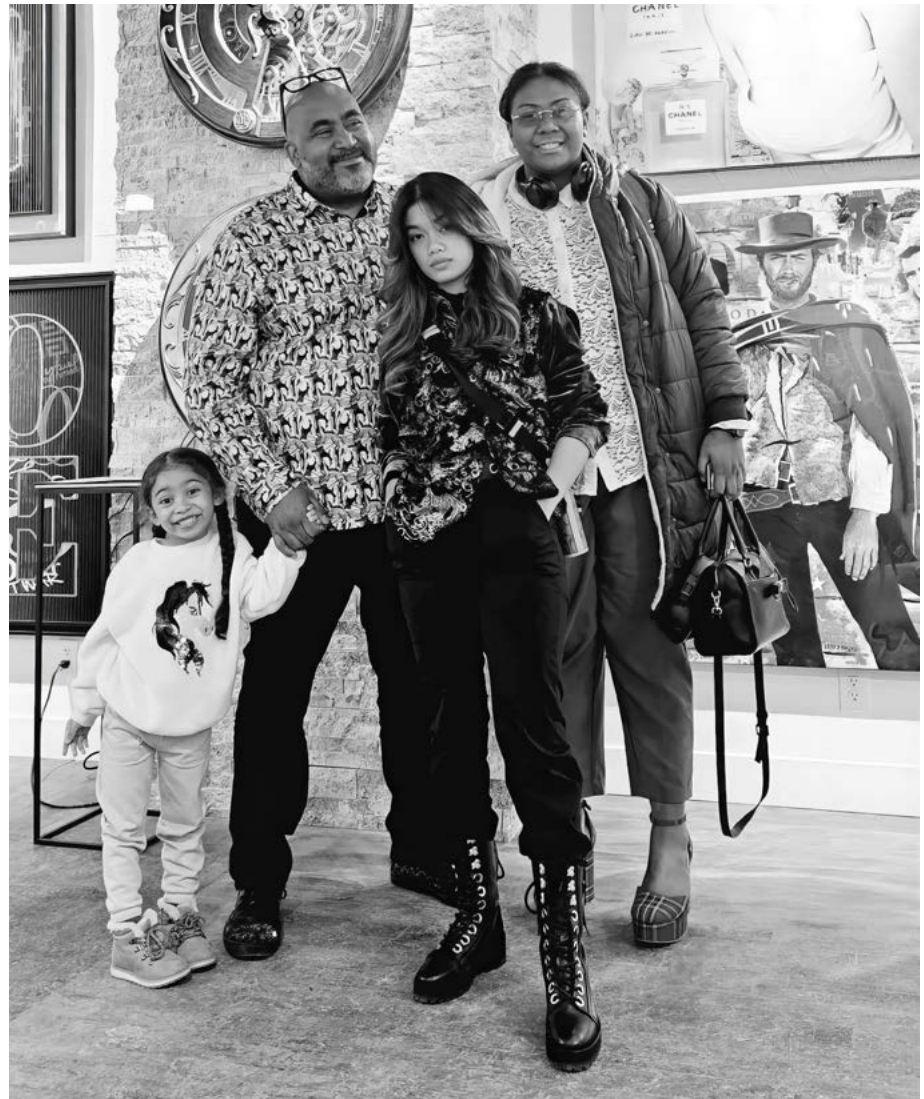
Kinetic art combines movement with meaning by its very nature. Mathis elevates this interplay by creating sculptures that engage viewers on multiple sensory levels. His work transcends mere mechanics to explore profound themes such as time, relationships, and human connection.

His sculptures are celebrated for their ability to resonate emotionally while dazzling with technical precision. Collectors seek his creations for their unique industrial strength

and artistic elegance. "Every piece I create isn't just about movement," Mathis explains. "It's about making a statement, about capturing the constant motion in life and turning it into something people can feel."

One of the most memorable moments in his career occurred when the Prince of Qatar visited Key West on his yacht. "He was exploring a gallery where my work was displayed," Mathis said. "He liked one of my pieces and said it had to be installed on his yacht the next day because he was leaving."

This serendipitous encounter reinforced the universal appeal of his



Above: Mathis with his daughters

kinetic art and remains a defining moment in his journey. Upon seeing his work, collectors often feel an immediate desire to own it. Many then commission him to create site-specific works of art.

A Universal Connection: Art that Resonates Across Spaces

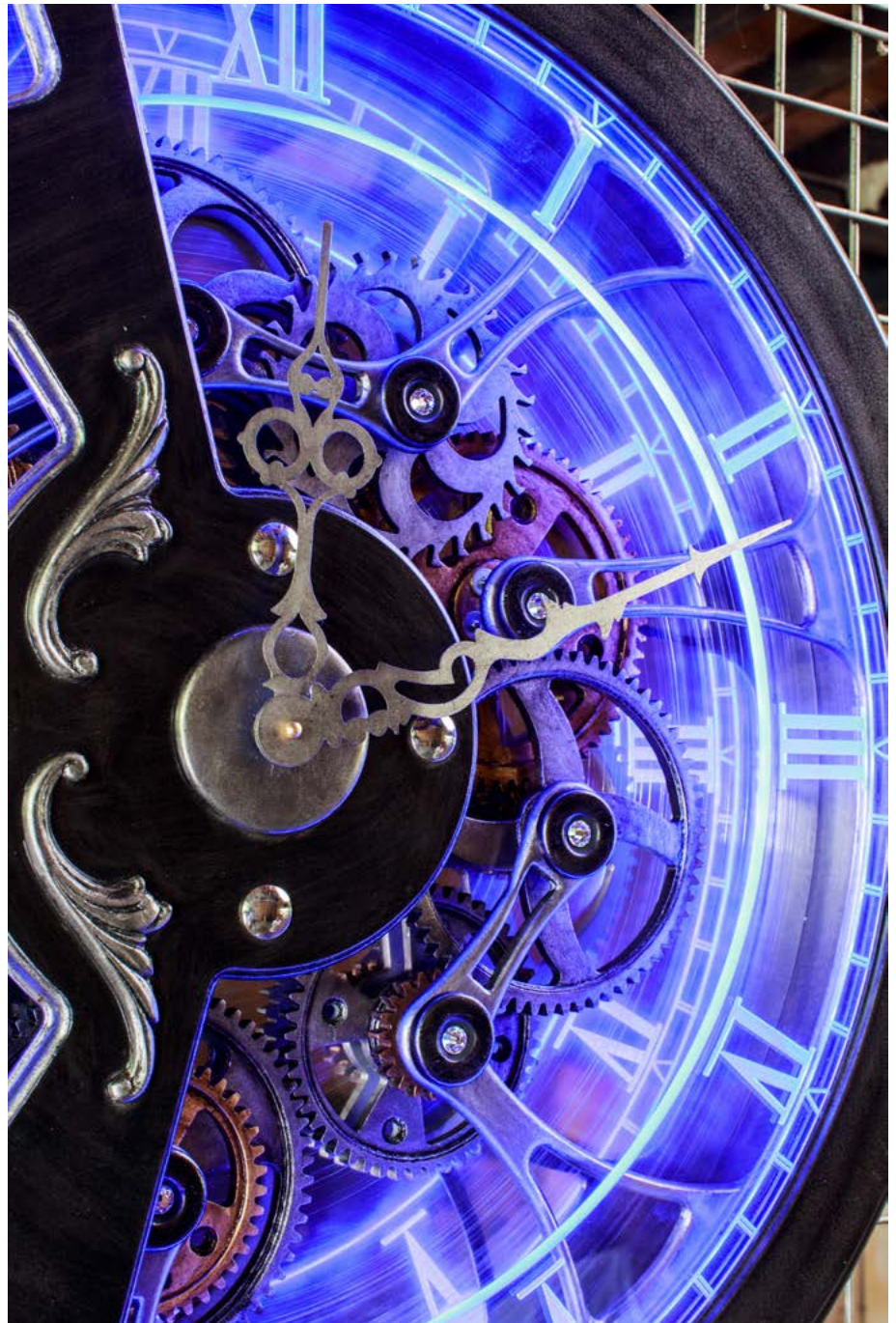
His work isn't confined to a single city. The sculptures that he creates have been exhibited in galleries across the United States, drawing admirers worldwide. His commissions reflect his work's versatility and broad appeal, which blends kinetic elegance with profound emotional resonance.

His sculptures are more than just feats of mechanical brilliance—they're emotional experiences that connect with viewers on a deeper level. His pieces, whether clocks, desks, or public installations, are imbued with a human touch—a reflection of the constant motion that defines life. They invite viewers to reflect on the cycles of time, the balance of relationships, and the power of leadership while captivating the eye with their mechanical elegance.

Mathis' attention to technical precision and cosmic themes is more than functional art. He bridges the ancient and the modern, the mechanical and the spiritual, creating a dialogue between humanity's eternal questions and contemporary innovation.

The Behalf: A Timepiece of Harmony and Interdependence

A recurring theme in his work is the exploration of relationships between people, concepts, or even parts of a machine. "The Behalf," a kinetic clock, beautifully exemplifies this.



More than a mere timepiece, it represents the delicate balance and unity required to sustain literal and symbolic partnerships. The intricate, interlocking gears within the clock mirror the unseen labor necessary to maintain harmony in any relationship, much like the effort behind human connections.

The clock's two halves move in unison, evoking a metaphor for how

Right: Detail of "The Behalf" clock by Dale Mathis

disparate individuals or elements come together to form a greater whole. As each gear turns, it represents the cooperative energy necessary to keep the relationship functional and thriving. The subtle, rhythmic movement of the clock is hypnotic and profound, reminding viewers of the balance, cooperation,

and continuous effort that make any partnership—whether personal or professional—truly work.

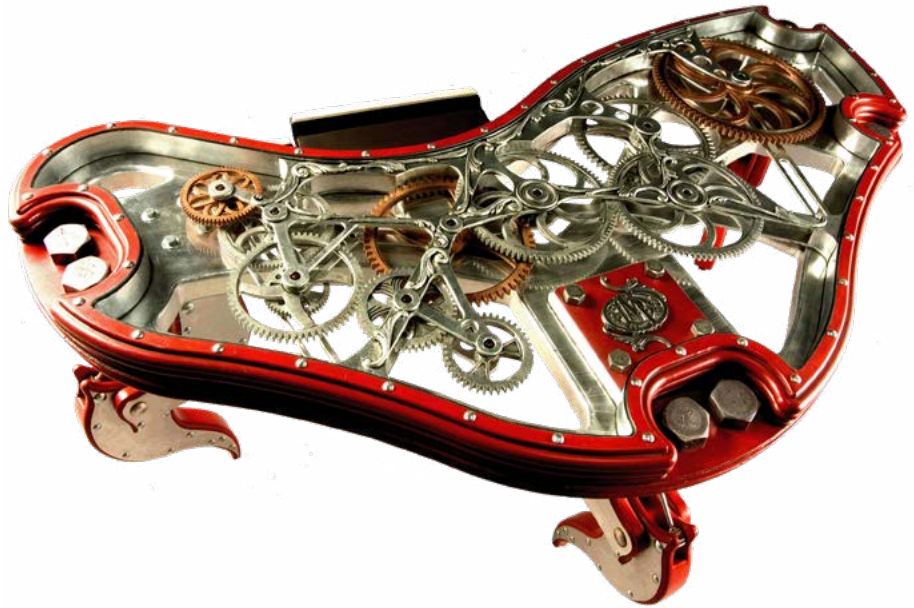
Astrological Clock: A Journey Through Time and the Cosmos

His fascination with movement extends beyond the human world to the celestial. With "Astrological Clock," he draws upon the ancient human desire to find meaning in the stars and the cycles of time. This stunning piece invites viewers to reflect on their place in the universe by connecting the mechanical precision of the clock to the vast, ethereal nature of the cosmos.

The "Astrological Clock" symbolizes humanity's never-ending quest to bring order to chaos. It features horoscope symbols, planets, and constellations. At the clock's center, the sun radiates, casting light on the celestial bodies that orbit it—each piece meticulously placed to mirror the natural flow of time and space. As the clock moves, viewers are reminded that our lives, much like the



Above: Detail of "Astrological Clock" by Dale Mathis



Above: "The Executive Desk" by Dale Mathis

stars, are part of a larger, interconnected system.

The Executive Desk: A Fusion of Industrial Strength and Mechanical Elegance

His creations aren't limited to the fine art world. His ability to combine aesthetic beauty with practical functionality is best seen in the "Executive Desk," originally commissioned by a doctor before catching the eye of director F. Gary Gray for the film "Straight Outta Compton." With its sleek lines, moving gears, and industrial strength, the desk symbolizes leadership, authority and ambition.

The desk's legs, inspired by a chrome shock absorber from a hot rod shop, and the oversized bolts, molded from an abandoned crane, represent his unique ability to turn raw materials into symbols of power and resilience. But the desk's true beauty lies in its movement. The gears, constantly in motion, mirror the relentless energy of decision-making and control. Mathis explains, "It's more than a piece of

furniture. It's a reflection of what it means to lead, move forward and harness the power within."

Gates further elaborates on Mathis' exceptional journey. "Visual art isn't what we usually expect from a Black kid forged in the dangerous streets of Los Angeles in the 1980s. He could have just as easily ended up as another statistic." Instead, Mathis channeled his environment into a creative outlet, crafting works as intellectually compelling as visually captivating.

The Toothsome Chocolate Emporium: A Bespoke Experience

One of Mathis' most public and beloved commissions is his work for the Toothsome Chocolate Emporium, a steampunk-inspired dining venue at Universal Studios Hollywood. The venue's whimsical, Victorian-industrial aesthetic provided the perfect canvas for his kinetic creations, seamlessly integrated into the emporium's fantastical narrative.

"This project allowed me to dive into the narrative, to create something



Left: "Sextant" by Dale Mathis. Universal Studios request site-specific changes for their Toothsome Chocolate Emporium

Mathis is an artist and collaborator who thrives on bringing visions of others to life. For example, his work with a prominent luxury hotel group in Las Vegas showcased his ability to design site-specific pieces that aligned seamlessly with the brand's steampunk aesthetic. The result was an immersive kinetic sculpture displayed in the hotel's main lobby, capturing the attention of guests worldwide. This collaboration demonstrated his unique talent for merging artistic ingenuity with a collector's or brand's conceptual needs, leaving a lasting impression on viewers.

For those looking to go beyond the existing pieces, Mathis welcomes collaborating with collectors who want to think outside the box. His expertise in creating custom, site-specific works offers endless possibilities for new, innovative creations that reflect your unique vision. Whether it's a bespoke piece for your home or a large-scale installation, his ability to bring imaginative concepts to life is unparalleled.

As Mathis himself says, "I love working with people who have a bold vision. Together, we can create something special that moves both in mechanics and spirit."

Family, Purpose, and the Art of Connection

Mathis' creative journey is deeply intertwined with his role as a father to three daughters, shaping his artistry and his approach to life and purpose. He reflects, "Creating isn't just about self-expression anymore. It's about purpose and sustainability. Everything I create has to have a

that wasn't just beautiful but integral to the storytelling of the space," Mathis reflects. His pieces—moving gears and interactive elements—became central to the steampunk ambiance, turning the dining experience into something magical and immersive.

By blending narrative and design, Mathis elevates the Toothsome Chocolate Emporium from a dining venue to an experiential work of art, exemplifying how site-specific work can enrich cultural spaces.

Explore and Imagine: An Invitation to Collectors and Enthusiasts

The works featured in this article are just a glimpse into the breadth of his portfolio. His extensive body of work spans many themes, styles and mediums, offering something for every admirer of kinetic art. Whether you're a seasoned collector or a curious enthusiast, exploring Mathis' full portfolio reveals the depth of his creativity and vision.



Above: Reah Mathis, the business side of Dale Mathis Studios. (The height difference is true!)

reason, a function, and a legacy for my daughters." His role as a father and husband inspires much of his work, weaving personal meaning into every creation.

At the heart of his studio is vibrant family collaboration. His wife's colorful outlook on life and his daughter Hope's perspective are catalysts for fresh creative energy. Hope, an aspiring artist, often collaborates with Mathis, contributing modern and conceptual viewpoints that breathe new life into their projects. Together, the family delves into the evolving intersection of art and business, crafting a sustainable creative enterprise that remains authentic to its emotional core. Mathis is resolute in teaching his daughters the art of creation and navigating its business, ensuring they're equipped to succeed in their artistic endeavors.

Mathis also reflects on the influence of modern technology in his process. "It's not just about movement;

it's about connection—both mechanical and emotional," he explains, underscoring his dedication to creating meaningful and resonant works.

Looking Ahead

As Mathis looks to the future, he envisions evolving beyond kinetic art to explore new creative directions. Inspired by the artistic transformations of figures like Picasso, Mathis is ready to enter a new chapter in his career. "I'm going to evolve from just doing kinetic art. I'm at a point in my life where I'm ready to explore and reinvent. As Picasso went through his blue period and many others as he evolved, I will, too. I'm going to be working more with my wife and daughter. We want to develop the business into a design firm further and work on corporate-driven visions and the art we create. We love being involved with challenging big projects."

The family aims to tackle corporate projects while continuing to create art that resonates on multiple levels. Mathis is excited about challenging large-scale projects, which offer opportunities to push boundaries and expand his impact. "The future is about exploring the unknown, finding new ways to connect with people through art," he shares.

A Legacy in Motion

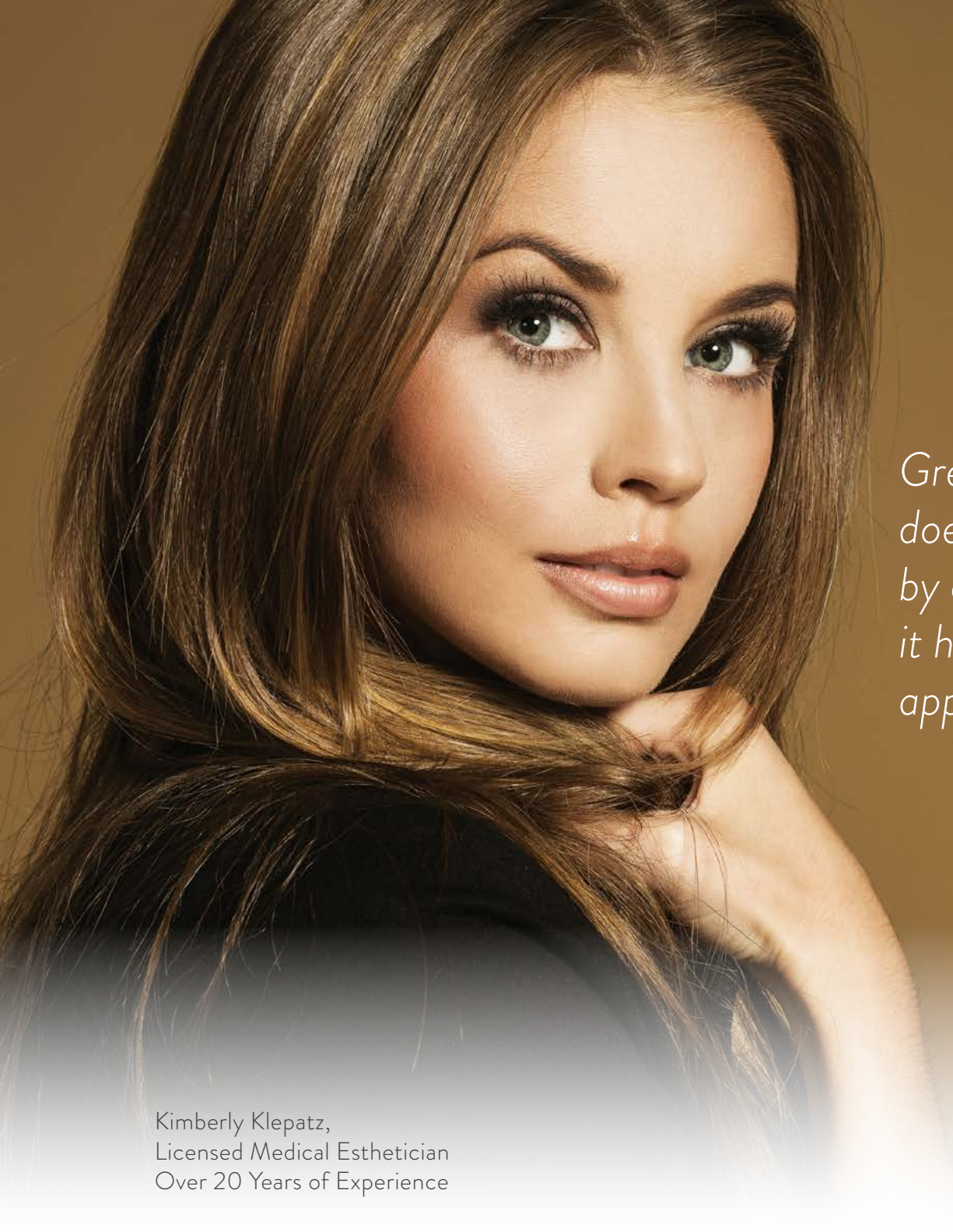
Ultimately, Mathis' work draws people into the world of art. Early in his career, he learned that movement captures attention—it's what sets his pieces apart and earns them a place at the forefront of galleries. As his journey continues, his commitment to innovation and connection remains steadfast. With his family's fresh perspectives and the ever-evolving landscape of technology, Mathis is excited for what lies ahead.

For collectors, enthusiasts, or corporate innovators, Mathis offers more than just art—he offers a chance to engage with works that move physically and emotionally. "Art is about collaboration," Mathis says. "Whether it's with my family, my collectors, or the spaces my work inhabits, it's about creating something truly special and timeless."

As his long-time friend and collaborator, Gates captures the essence of Mathis' journey and character: "Dale has been a very close friend of mine for decades. We talk often. He's very interested in the 'how and why' of things. He told me that as a child, he would take any opportunity to open a discarded radio or television to see how the mechanics worked. I think he seeks to give us that in his work."

This poignant insight into Mathis' lifelong curiosity and dedication to understanding and sharing the intricacies of movement adds a deeply personal note to his artistic legacy. It reflects not only his mastery of kinetic art but also his drive to inspire others to see the beauty in the details of life.

For those captivated by the motion of life's intricate gears, his art provides a space to explore, reflect, and imagine. To see more, visit www.dalemathis.com.



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THE GRANDEST STAGE OF THEM ALL

WWE SUPERSTAR BIANCA BELAIR SHARES EXCITEMENT FOR WRESTLEMANIA 41

By Heather Turk / Photography courtesy of WWE



On April 19 and 20, the biggest event in professional wrestling returns to Las Vegas when WrestleMania takes place at Allegiant Stadium.

Wrestling fans from all over the world will travel to the Entertainment Capital of the World for the two-night event, which is just one of several events World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) will bring to Las Vegas in the days leading up to and following its annual "Showcase of the Immortals." While the Road to WrestleMania is always filled with plenty of twists and turns, *Chic Compass* caught up with WWE Superstar Bianca Belair last November to talk about WrestleMania 41, her dream match scenarios and her career as one of WWE's most decorated Superstars.

Chic Compass: It's been 32 years since WrestleMania was last held in Las Vegas (WrestleMania IX at Caesars Palace). What makes Las Vegas the perfect place to hold WrestleMania 41?

Bianca Belair: Las Vegas is the perfect place because WrestleMania is already as big as it is, but Vegas is the Entertainment Capital of the World. You mix WrestleMania and Vegas—I can't think of anything better. WrestleMania is "The Grandest Stage of Them All," and I don't think there's a better place to have it than Las Vegas. I think it will be the best WrestleMania in history, in my honest opinion.

Chic Compass: I know the card is still being finalized, but everyone knows you can't have WrestleMania without the "EST"

of WWE (Belair's nickname since she's, among other superlatives, the quickest, the roughest and the strongest). What would your dream match be for WrestleMania 41?

Bianca Belair: Just being at WrestleMania is a dream in itself. Everyone's goal is to get to WrestleMania because it's our Super Bowl of the year. With our roster getting so big and stacked with talent, it's a fight to get to WrestleMania.

Above: Last year, Bianca Belair (along with Jade Cargill and Naomi) defeated Damage CTRL's Kairi Sane, Dakota Kai and Asuka in a 6-woman tag team match at WrestleMania XL

Far Left: Since making her debut in 2016, Bianca Belair has been one of WWE's most beloved Superstars

But if I could have my dream match, if it's a tag team match, I don't know if this would be possible, but I'd say it would be against Natalya and Beth Phoenix or Becky Lynch and Charlotte Flair. Those two acts could be huge. For a singles match, Charlotte Flair or Rhea Ripley.

Chic Compass: Having competed at several WrestleManias in the past, what has been your favorite WrestleMania moment thus far?

Bianca Belair: My favorite moment was WrestleMania 37, where I made history by becoming one of the first Black females to main event WrestleMania. It was more than just a match. It was a moment that will go down in history, impacting and influencing future generations. Everyone won that night, and we also won an ESPY from that match.

Chic Compass: You're known for making your own wrestling gear. Have you given any thought yet as to what you want to do for WrestleMania 41?

Bianca Belair: As soon as you're finished with WrestleMania, the very next day, you're already prepping for the next one because WrestleMania is what everybody looks forward to. You're probably thinking about your match, entrance and gear because everyone wants to bring their A-game to WrestleMania. I've been brainstorming, but nothing has come to me yet regarding my gear. I will experiment and put everything into it because I'm always trying to top myself from the previous year. I want to make sure it's something amazing.

Chic Compass: WrestleMania is known for its grand entrances, and you've had some memorable entrances in the past. If you

could have anyone perform your entrance theme at this year's WrestleMania, who would it be?

Bianca Belair: It's so hard because I'm such a fan of so many people, but if I could have Beyoncé bring me out, that would be crazy.

Chic Compass: One thing announced for WrestleMania 41 is that this will be John Cena's final WrestleMania. Looking back on his storied career, do you have a favorite memory of him?

Bianca Belair: I'm a big John Cena fan, so I love many of his matches, but my favorite moments of his are those that happen behind the scenes

Below: Fans who book the Silver WrestleMania 41 Priority Pass ticket package will get to attend a WrestleMania kickoff party featuring an onstage appearance by WWE Superstar Cody Rhodes





Above: It's been announced that WrestleMania 41 will be a part of 16-time world champion John Cena's WWE retirement tour

because I feel that's what makes him who he is. It's not just who he is in the ring; it's who he is outside of the ring that makes him a Superstar and a champion at all times. He's always sitting at a TV backstage, watching everyone's matches. He's learning about his craft, but he's also giving gems to other people by watching everyone's matches, and then when the talent comes through the curtain, he pulls them aside and gives them advice. He wants to give back to this business.

Chic Compass: You were recently in Las Vegas for ComplexCon. What are some of your favorite things to do in town that you'd recommend to those visiting for WrestleMania?

Bianca Belair: I've been to Vegas a couple of times with my husband (WWE Superstar Montez Ford). We went there the day after we got engaged, so we celebrated our fifth anniversary and renewed our vows in Vegas. We love to go to the Grand Canyon, stop at the Vegas sign and see shows—we just went and saw "O." We also like Fremont Street. It's so much fun and one of our favorite spots.

Chic Compass: The women's division in WWE continues to impress, and I would be remiss not to mention all the talent in NXT (WWE's developmental brand). Is there anyone in NXT you're looking forward to getting in the ring with one day on Raw or SmackDown?

Bianca Belair: NXT has a lot of talent right now. Kelani Jordan is amazing. Lash Legend and Jakara Jackson were just in an eight-women tag match in Saudi Arabia and impressed many people. You have Roxanne Perez, Fallon Henley and Stephanie Vaquer just hit the scene. It's growing more and more. I love that because they're the future. One

day, they're going to be on Raw and SmackDown. The company is in good hands right now, but it will be in even better hands in the future with the women continuing to show up, show out and showcase themselves.

Chic Compass: You've been a big inspiration to the women's division, having held the WWE Women's Championship, the WWE SmackDown Women's Championship and the WWE Women's Tag Team Championship. Who has been your favorite opponent over the years?

Bianca Belair: I have two. Bayley is amazing. She was one of the first people with whom I had one of my first feuds. She introduced me to the WWE Universe. She's talented, selfless and an amazing person. Even though we have our differences when it comes to our characters, she's a great example of who you should be inside and outside of the ring. The other is Becky Lynch. She recently did an interview where she called me her wrestling soulmate, and I couldn't agree more. We're great together; we make magic happen. She has done so much in the women's division to help it evolve and grow. She's amazing. I have learned a lot from both of them. I want to do the same for others in this business as they have done.

Chic Compass: Throughout most of your career, you've been a babyface (a wrestling term for a good guy). Do you ever want to become a heel (villain) again?

Bianca Belair: Being a heel is a lot of fun. You get to do whatever you want to do. Heels can go out there and get booed, and they're doing their job, or they can get cheered, and people say they're still doing

their job. Being a babyface is more difficult, but I love the challenge and the impact. I connect with my fans and younger fans, which gives me purpose. Anything can happen in WWE, though. I was a heel in NXT, and it was a lot of fun, but they're both fun in their own way.

Chic Compass: Outside of the ring, you recently appeared in an episode of "Bel-Air." Do you want to appear in more TV shows in the future?

Bianca Belair: Yes, it's always been a goal of mine. Right now, I enjoy being a WWE Superstar, and I'm still perfecting my craft, but I would love to venture out more. "Bel-Air" was an amazing experience. Everyone was super nice. I'm a fan of the show, so it meant even more that I got to be a part of it. I think WWE opens the door for many of us, and I've always said, "WWE Superstars—we do it all." We're a perfect fit for TV shows and movies, so I would love to capitalize on that in the future.

Chic Compass: You also recently starred in your own reality TV series with your husband, "Love & WWE: Bianca & Montez." People always say you shouldn't mix your personal and professional lives, but I would imagine that it's a lot easier to be married to someone who understands the business.

Bianca Belair: I'm blessed to do what I love with the person I love. When you have huge accomplishments, and your significant other is there, they're not just happy for you because of that accomplishment—they've been there through the ups and the downs, the nights you're venting, and the nights when you're trying to figure out your gear and are perfecting your craft. They've been there for all those moments, so they

understand the significance of when something amazing happens. But it's a balance. We both go through our own things. Sometimes, I need to vent, but he needs to vent at the same time. But it's moments when I accomplish something, and he's there with me, or when he accomplishes something, and I'm right there with him, and I know how much it means to him; I think that's the best part of it.

Chic Compass: Finally, we talked about your dream match at WrestleMania 41, but what would your dream match be for Montez?

Bianca Belair: Oh, man. Dream scenario for Montez at WrestleMania? He's been in a tag team called The Street Profits with Angelo Dawkins. I've been there since the very beginning when they first started, and I know how hard they've been working. In my opinion, they're one of the best tag teams. Their dream opponent would be The Usos. Getting the gold at WrestleMania would be something that would be very special to them. But for my husband as a singles competitor? I know he wants to be a champion, so a dream match for him is anything where he gets to hold gold because he deserves it.

Tickets for WrestleMania 41 are now on sale at [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com). Additionally, fans can purchase WrestleMania Priority Pass ticket packages from WWE's official fan hospitality partner, On Location, which includes a variety of unforgettable experiences, including exclusive events with some WWE Superstars. Visit www.onlocationexp.com/wwe/wrestlemania-tickets for more details.

Adventures in Travel & Dining

THE PHILIPPINES

THE JOY OF RETURNING HOME

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANET SUSAN R. NEPALES



It has been five years since my husband, Ruben, and I last visited the Philippines, so our trip back home in November was special.

It was our first time flying via Philippine Airlines (PAL), and during the 13-hour flight, the flight attendants made us feel like we were already in the Philippines. They served delicious Filipino food, from sinigang na baboy and pork adobo to arroz caldo and tapsilog.

My dad, Vic Rodriguez, recently turned 92. I haven't seen him or my family—which has grown from a family of eight to a clan of 35—with the new additions: grandnephews and grandnieces, new in-laws, and new partners.

For our first week, we stayed at the Solaire Resort & Casino in Entertainment City, built along the Bay City area of Parañaque in Metro Manila.

Even though it was November, the luxurious hotel lobby was already decked in Christmas decorations. The Philippines, after all, is known for having the longest Christmas celebration, from September to Jan. 6.

At the tree-lighting ceremony at Solaire, internationally renowned Lea Salonga and guest Clay Aiken, the "American Idol" second-season runner-up, sang with the Philippine Madrigal Singers. Actress and singer Carla Guevara hosted the event.

Later that evening, Lea and Clay performed her Broadway showstoppers

Top Right: "Love the Philippines" sign

Right: Janet Nepales stands before a Christmas tree at a mall in the Philippines





Above: Designer Puey Quinones at his beautiful atelier. Photo by Ruben V. Nepales

Right: A dinner hosted by designer Puey Quinones, cooked by his personal chef, was one of the most delicious in the columnist's three-week homecoming. Photo by Ruben V. Nepales

and songs like "Stayin' Alive" in a concert aptly titled "Stage, Screen and Everything in Between" at Solaire's The Theatre. Lea's talented brother, Gerard, was the musical conductor of the show.

During our three-week stay, we tried to catch up with some friends, including fashion designer Puey Quinones, who invited us to have dinner at his well-appointed new atelier in Poblacion, Makati.

Puey loves to cook, but this time, he had a personal chef serve us some

of his favorite dishes. I am so proud of Puey for managing two ateliers at the same time in two time zones—one in Los Angeles and another in Manila.

It was a blast to reunite with some young filmmakers we met in Cannes when we attended the opening of the QCinema International Film Festival. They showed their short films, part of the "Directors' Factory Philippines," at the festival, which was celebrating its 12th year under the leadership of our friend Ed Lejano, the festival's artistic director.

It was an honor to meet the Philippines' National Artist for Film and Broadcast Arts Ricky Lee again, who attended the festival, and good old friends like Nestor Cuartero, formerly of Tempo.

Chef Sharwin Tee must have predicted that we needed a respite from the



chaotic city, so we gladly accepted his invitation to have lunch at Ezra Resort in Tagaytay, where he prepared some of his grandma's favorite dishes at his Little Grace popup.

Since we were already in Tagaytay, we stopped by my younger sister Rebecca Mendez's house in Trece Martires. My brother-in-law Willy Mendez, a culinary expert, prepared some of his home-cooked specialties there.

My Rodriguez family reunion was held at The Perfect Pint in Rockwell, where I finally met my new grand-nephews and grandnieces. They were happy with our gifts to the clan: Stella Rosa Philippines bottles of wine.

To our surprise, we bumped into singers Dingdong Avanzado and Jessa Zaragoza, along with their daughter Jada, who treated their guests from Canada at the same restaurant. Our writer friend Senedy Que also surprised us by dropping by, as he lives at The Proscenium in the Rockwell area.

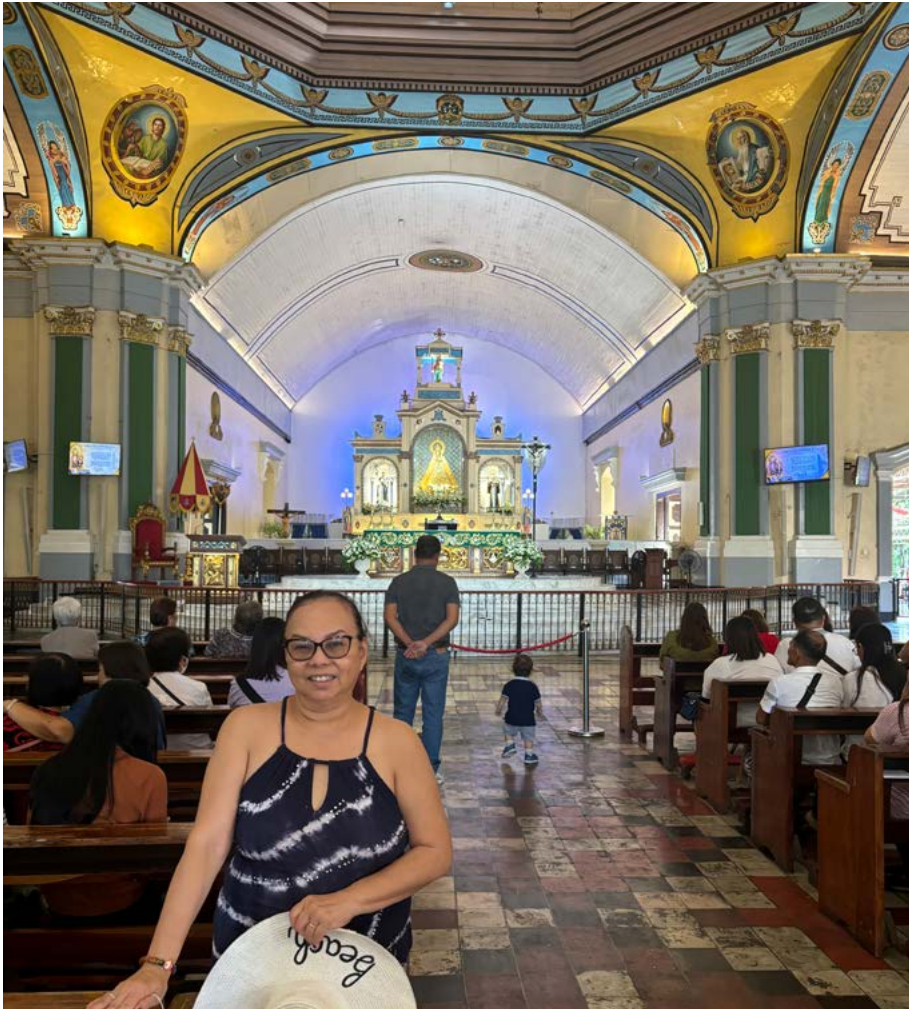
We received a rare invitation from First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos to the Laperal Mansion for a historic get-together and the launch of CineGang Inc., a nonprofit organization composed of filmmakers, producers, executives, and writers who aim to upgrade Philippine cinema through seminars and workshops.

The Philippines' royalty in Tinseltown attended, including actors Vilma Santos, Christopher de Leon, Tirso Cruz III, and Dingdong Dantes; producers Joji Alonso and Perci Intalan; Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) head Don Artes; Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) chair Joey Javier



Above Top: Chef Sharwin Tee served a nine-course Tsinoy feast inspired by his childhood memories, especially of watching his grandmother cook. Photo by Ruben V. Nepales

Above: CineGang, Inc. members with First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos at the Laperal Mansion



Above: Janet Nepales at Our Lady of Manaoag

Reyes; ABS-CBN president and CEO Carlo Katigbak; and incorporators Kevin Andrew Tan, Paolo Victor del Rosario, Pedro Laylo Jr., Paolo Roberto Martel, and Rajan Uttamchandani, among others.

A visit to Pangasinan is a must since my husband is a native of that province. We enjoyed the famous Calasiao puto and sampled many other native delicacies. He always prayed to the Señor Divino Tesoro and Our Lady of Manaoag when he was in grade school in Pangasinan and made sure that we prayed and lit candles at these churches. He shared several stories about the miracles that occurred there.

We were grateful to our sister-in-law's godson, Phil Hernandez, for driving us to Pangasinan from Manila.

We found our blissful beach house in Binmaley, Pangasinan. Thanks to our Ate Imelda Estrellas, who lovingly opened this vacation house designed by her late husband, Kuya Nitoy Estrellas.

Here, we could really enjoy the fresh air, beautiful landscape, relaxing and calming beach, and all the homecooked dishes they had specially prepared for us: garlic fried rice, tapsilog, tsokolate-e, dried fish, spicy crabs, sinigang na baka, coconut juice, and lots of fresh fruits like lanzones, bananas, and mangosteen.

I hadn't heard of Station Zero in Boracay until we stayed at the Crimson Resort & Spa Boracay for the first time.

Taking PAL again from Manila to Boracay, we were welcomed by the Crimson staff and brought by a van to their private dock, where we were served native delicacies and freshly squeezed fruit juices.

At Station Zero, there are no crowds or vendors. It is just you, the white sand, the clear blue water, and the magnificent views. Yes, there is heaven on earth.

The hotel's general manager, Didier Belmonte, made us feel like we were home with his interesting stories about island life. Nico Jhie Alejandrino, the front office manager, also ensured everything was okay with our stay.

After our short three-day stay in Boracay, we proceeded to Solaire Resort North in Quezon City, my birth city.

Upon entering the lobby, the spectacular Nikolas Weinstein silver sculpture "The Mangrove" welcomes you.

I went crazy over the champurrado with toppings like dilis and tuyo at Fresh and the varied offerings at the food court, including dangit and sisig.

Thank you to Tristan Dela Paz, senior manager of hotel services; Gabriel B. Sicubam, assistant manager of Fresh; and Chef Jonathan Carranza of Fresh, for ensuring we had a great time.

We returned to the Solaire Resort & Casino in Entertainment City to watch Raymond Lauchengco in his concert at The Theatre, celebrating 40 years in the business and



Above: Raymond Lauchengco in concert at The Theatre at Solaire Resort & Casino in Entertainment City

Left: Sunset in Crimson Resort & Spa Boracay

Below Left: "The Mangrove" sculpture by Nikolas Weinstein in Solaire Resort North



reminiscing about his days as an actor and singer.

His “Bagets” gang—Aga Muhlach, Herbert Bautista, and Eula Valdez—supported him and went onstage to sing and dance with him.

His good friend Martin Nievera congratulated Raymond on his 40th-anniversary concert, “Just Got Lucky.”

Raymond, who started in the Philippine entertainment industry when he was 18, had belter Bituin Escalante as his special guest. Kudos to first-time director Waya Gallardo on a job well done, musical director Marvin Querido, and Raymond’s manager, Girlie Rodis, for a memorable show.

We also met with fashion designer Francis Libiran, who invited us to his classy new shop at Edsa Shangri-La.

Unknown to many, Francis, who is an architecture graduate, used to work as a draftsman at my

architect brother Jun Rodriguez's office, Pimentel Rodriguez Simbulan & Partners Architects firm.

But after two years, Francis left architecture and concentrated on his passion—fashion.

Francis' manager, Arsi Baltazar; fashion designer Nat Manilag; and our good friend, beauty queen-actress-model-singer Bessie Badilla, who was in town from New York, joined us later for dinner.

We were surprised to see our long-lost friend, producer Robbie Tan, at the Philippine Movie Press Club's Star Awards for Movies, where he received a Lifetime Achievement Award. We were touched that Robbie even remembered to ask how my dad was doing; I found that very sweet.

As a co-founder of the Manila International Film Festival, we were proud to sponsor two panels with CineGang.

The first panel, titled "How to Award Season Your Film and TV Projects," featured longtime Oscar member David Magdael, president and CEO of David Magdael & Associates, and Annalee Paulo, president of 42West. They discussed how filmmakers could promote and market their films. It was moderated by multi-Emmy Award winner Lisa Lew and Winston Emamo, a Mano y Mano Media principal.

Above Right: Janet Nepales at the Philippine Airlines (PAL) check-in counter.

Center Right: (L-R) Ruben Nepales, Dingdong Avanzado, Jessa Zaragoza, and Janet Nepales

Right: Janet Nepales at Crimson Resort & Spa Boracay



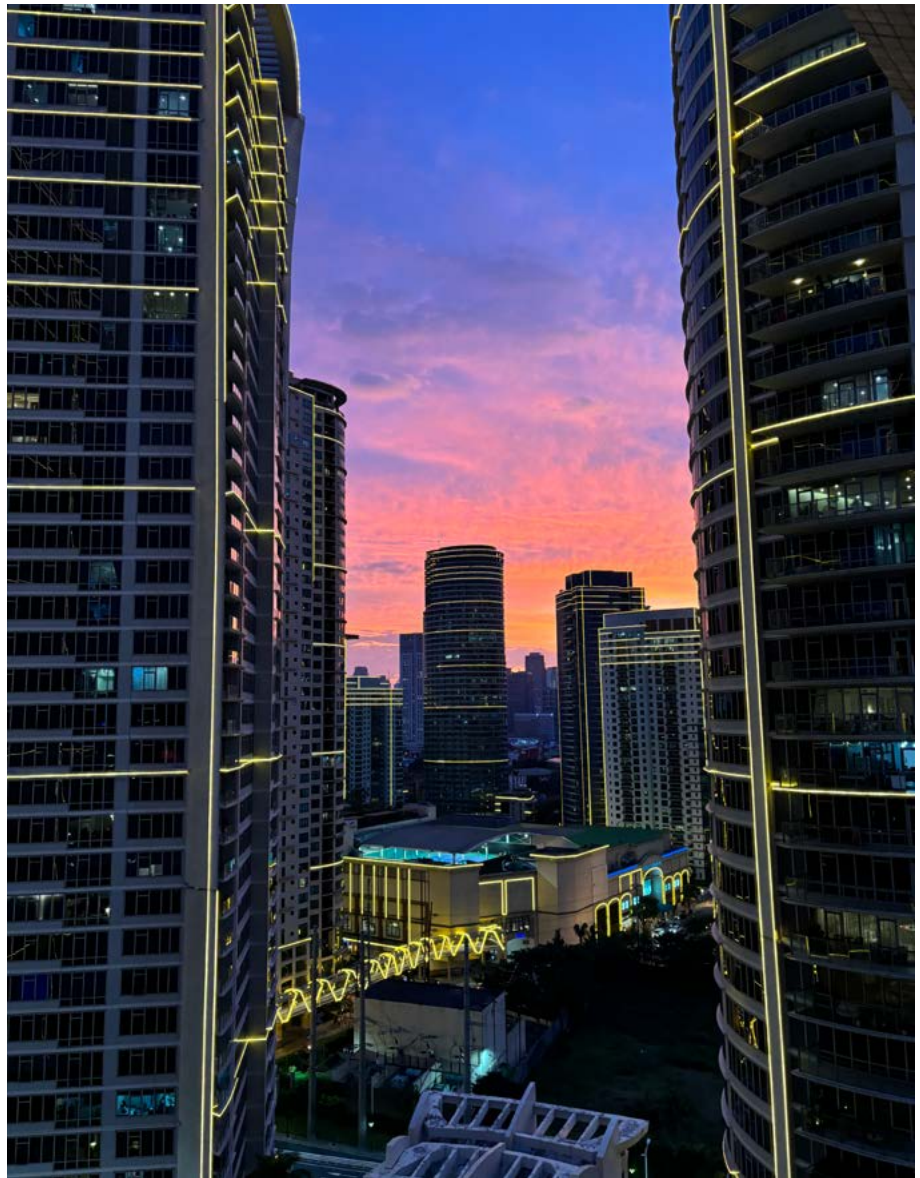
The second panel, titled “A Filipino in the Lead: An Afternoon with Nico Santos and Mark Dacascos,” featured Santos, known for his roles in “Crazy Rich Asians,” “Superstore,” and “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3,” and Dacascos, known for “Iron Chef America,” “Hawaii Five-O,” and “John Wick: Chapter 3 – Parabellum.” They shared their experiences about how they started in the industry, what kept them in the game, and the role their heritage played in keeping them there. Emano also moderated the panel.

My grandnephew, Daniel Nepales, a budding filmmaker, was excited to watch and learn—as were the other attendees.

Flying back home to Los Angeles via PAL, we were surprised when a familiar face welcomed us—my charming niece, Elgeen Nepales, an LAX/PAL ground staff member.

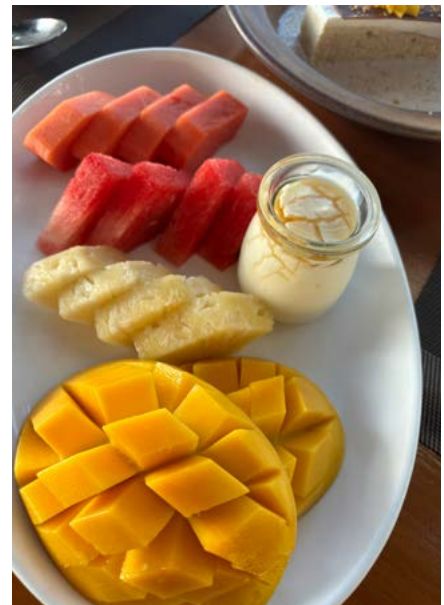
The three event-packed weeks in the Philippines made us realize how you miss the islands and the people who make island living special.

Above Right: Sunset in Makati City, Philippines



Right: Chef Sharwin Tee's Amah's Gulaman

Below and Far Right: Philippine fruits





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2025 BUSINESS TRENDS WHAT WILL WE THINK OF NEXT?

By Joseph Amato

In 2025, businesses across the United States and around the world will grapple with unprecedented disruption. Economic uncertainty, compounded by constant technological advancements and ever-evolving consumer preferences, is compelling industry leaders to rethink traditional business strategies.

Significant changes in the political climate will also impact business leaders and their decisions.

Buzzwords like tariffs, artificial

intelligence (AI), boomerang employees, decentralized finance, inflation and greenwashing will resonate throughout the business ecosystem and likely become key parts of planning and development this year.

To stay competitive, organizations must navigate these emerging—and often conflicting—trends shaping the future of business, the workplace, commerce and sustainability.

Generative AI, which saw rapid growth in the early 2020s, has been adopted by some business

leaders and market innovators as a vital tool for development, operational efficiency and innovation. From automating customer interactions to creating hyper-personalized marketing campaigns, AI is no longer just a fad but an operational necessity.

Businesses are investing in AI tools to streamline operations and create competitive advantages by delivering unique value propositions to their customers.

However, as the implementation of AI accelerates, ethical concerns

about data privacy and market bias loom. Companies prioritizing transparency, ethical AI practices and robust governance will stand out as industry leaders, while others may face technological challenges that could be overwhelming or impossible to manage.

In 2025, sustainability will no longer be seen as a selective trend but rather as an imperative. Governments, industry leaders, investors and consumers are demanding accountability, pushing businesses to adopt circular economy models that often conflict with what was previously considered rational business thinking. Decisions influenced by artificial intelligence are becoming more common and continue to challenge traditional business norms. This approach emphasizes reducing waste, reusing vital resources and designing products with sustainability in mind—but at what cost to human ingenuity and tradition?

There will continue to be a strong trend among companies like Schneider Electric, NEC, Illumina, Patagonia and IKEA that have embraced efficient practices, such as recycling and repair-and-resale programs, setting benchmarks for environmental stewardship. Organizations that fail to adapt risk losing market share to competitors with more sustainable business practices and a willingness to promote their efforts.

The hybrid work revolution, born from the COVID-19 pandemic, has solidified its place in the corporate world. In 2025, organizations are leveraging advanced collaboration technologies, such as augmented and virtual reality, to bridge the gap between remote and in-office teams.

The challenge lies in maintaining organizational culture, accountability and employee engagement.

Companies that invest in employee well-being, provide opportunities for professional growth and foster inclusivity and fairness are better positioned to attract and retain top talent.

Today's consumers expect brands to know them better than ever before. Advanced data analytics, AI and Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled devices allow businesses to anticipate customer needs and deliver tailored experiences. Retailers are creating immersive shopping environments, while financial institutions offer personalized financial products based on real-time data.

Yet businesses must tread carefully—personalization must not come at the cost of privacy. Striking the right balance between data utilization and consumer trust will be key. Corporate governance, not legislation, must be the driving force behind consumer protections. However, history suggests this will likely not be the case.

The supply chain disruptions of recent years have taught businesses a hard lesson: resilience matters more than cost efficiency. In 2025, supply chains are increasingly regionalized, automated and transparent. Blockchain technology enables real-time tracking, while AI-driven demand forecasting minimizes disruptions.

Resilient supply chains are not only about mitigating risks but also about enhancing flexibility to seize new market opportunities.

Financial technology continues to disrupt traditional banking models. In 2025, decentralized finance (DeFi) platforms are democratizing access to financial services, particularly in emerging markets. Blockchain-based solutions empower individuals and small businesses to participate in the

global economy without relying on traditional intermediaries.

For established financial institutions, collaboration with fintech startups is critical to staying relevant. Regulatory challenges remain a hurdle, but businesses that navigate them successfully can unlock immense growth potential.

However, strong concerns remain about the risks of decentralized currencies, such as Bitcoin (BTC). Many economists fear these unregulated currencies could collapse if founders decide to cash out on their massive growth in value or alter the algorithms driving them. The decentralized marketplace could experience a catastrophic collapse, potentially harming individuals, companies and entire economies.

With increasing burnout rates and mental health challenges, companies are recognizing the importance of fostering a supportive work environment. In 2025, employee well-being is integral to business strategy. Organizations are providing mental health resources, flexible work options and wellness programs to improve productivity and satisfaction.

A people-first approach boosts morale and enhances brand reputation, making companies more attractive to employees and customers.

The business landscape in 2025 is characterized by rapid change and complexity. Organizations that embrace disruption, prioritize innovation and align with evolving societal expectations will thrive. The key to success lies in agility—adapting to new realities while remaining grounded in purpose and values. For forward-thinking businesses, the opportunities are limitless.

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SHELLEY BERKLEY

A TRAILBLAZER DRIVING LAS VEGAS' BRIGHTEST FUTURE YET

By Laura Henkel / Photography courtesy of the City of Las Vegas

Shelley Berkley embodies all the glamour, heart and pioneering spirit that defines the transformative power of intention and destiny. Her story is a shimmering tale of happenstance, family resilience and a city's promise—a narrative deeply interwoven with the evolution of Las Vegas itself. At just 13 years old, Berkley and her family arrived in Las Vegas on what was meant to be a brief stopover during their journey to California. However, fate had other plans. Energized by the neon lights and vibrant spirit of the desert oasis, her parents made the life-altering decision to stay, forever changing the trajectory of Berkley's life.

More than her impressive résumé, Berkley is a petite powerhouse who exudes charisma and genuine care for her community. Known for her articulate and polished demeanor, she captures the essence of Las Vegas with a style that mirrors the city's vibrancy and flair. Despite her many accomplishments, Berkley remains approachable and deeply connected to the people she serves, embodying warmth, authenticity and compassion. Her dedication to her community has made her a trusted leader and a beacon of inspiration for those around her.



Above: Las Vegas Mayor Shelley Berkley



Above: City of Las Vegas Mayor and City Council. From Left: Shondra Summers-Armstrong, Francis Allen-Palenske, Brian Knudsen, Shelley Berkley, Olivia Diaz, Victoria Seaman, Nancy E. Brune

The Neon Glow of Opportunity

In the early 1960s, Las Vegas was in flux, pulsing with unparalleled allure. The bright marquees illuminated a burgeoning entertainment hub, yet beneath the surface lay the grit and ambition of a city constantly re-inventing itself. Berkley's father, who worked his way up from waiter to maître d' at the legendary Copa Room in the Stardust, embodied the dynamic spirit of Las Vegas. His role brought the family into close proximity to the glamour, industriousness and strong work ethic of an era defined by economic drive.

The position of maître d' wasn't just a job; it was a testament to collaboration and compassion forged

through hard work and resilience. To rise to such an esteemed position required technical skill and the ability to cultivate relationships with diverse individuals, making them feel seen, heard and respected. At the Copa Room, Berkley's father demonstrated an extraordinary ability to connect with people, from celebrities to everyday patrons and staff, creating a welcoming environment that embodied the essence of hospitality. His capacity to navigate challenges, foster teamwork and ensure every guest felt cared for left an indelible mark on Berkley, instilling values that would shape her leadership philosophy.

This spirit of ambition and compassion permeated Berkley's upbringing. As a cocktail waitress at the historic Golden Steer, while attending UNLV, she witnessed the intersections of ambition, hard work and innovation that defined the city. Golden Steer wasn't merely a job but a microcosm of Las Vegas—a place where high rollers, celebrities

and everyday dreamers coalesced. Every establishment along the Strip was a facet of a shimmering jewel that served as a beacon of possibility, fueling the dreams of all who arrived in this desert oasis.

Forging a Path: Education and Early Career

Building on the lessons of determination and perseverance learned in her early years, Berkley's relentless drive took her to the University of San Diego School of Law, where she earned her degree in 1976. Returning to Las Vegas, she began her legal career, navigating the complexities of Nevada's gaming and hospitality industries as counsel for prominent casinos. Her roles provided invaluable insight into the city's economic heartbeat and laid the foundation for her transition into public service.

Her early career was defined by her ability to merge advocacy with

leadership. As the national director of the American Hotel-Motel Association, Berkley championed policies that reinforced Nevada's tourism-driven economy. Her time as deputy director of the Nevada State Commerce Department further established her as a dedicated advocate for economic growth, balancing the interests of businesses and residents. These experiences solidified her expertise in economic matters and set the stage for her future in public service.

Political Milestones: Championing Nevada's Future

Berkley's legal and advocacy experience naturally transitioned into a political career. In 1982, she was elected to the Nevada Assembly, representing the 5th District. Her tenure focused on education reform, economic development and social justice, setting the stage for her later contributions to higher education as a member of the Nevada University and Community College System Board of Regents. As vice chair, she championed initiatives that expanded student opportunities across the state, ensuring that education remained a cornerstone of Nevada's progress.

This momentum carried her to the national stage. In 1998, Berkley achieved a historic milestone, becoming the U.S. representative for Nevada's 1st Congressional District. Over seven terms, she earned a reputation as a trailblazer, advocating fiercely for health care reform, veterans' services and education. Among her many accomplishments, her role in securing funding for the Las Vegas Veterans Administration Medical Center stands as a testament to her dedication to Nevada's communities. Her ability to navigate the complexities of governance

while remaining deeply connected to her constituents exemplifies her commitment to public service.

Higher Education Leadership: Transforming Futures

Following her time in Congress, Berkley transitioned into higher education leadership, bringing her wealth of experience to the role of chief executive officer and senior provost of the Touro College and University System in Nevada and California. During her tenure, she addressed critical health care workforce shortages, fostering partnerships to expand educational opportunities. Under her leadership, Touro developed programs in nursing, physical therapy and other health care disciplines, positioning Nevada as a leader in health care education.

Berkley's time at Touro was marked by her belief in the transformative power of education. She demonstrated her commitment to empowering individuals and uplifting communities by expanding access and cultivating partnerships. Her work

reflected a larger vision of progress—one that prioritized inclusivity, sustainability and innovation. This chapter of her career bridged her dedication to public service with a commitment to fostering the next generation of leaders.

The Goodmans' Legacy: Building a Foundation

Berkley's vision for Las Vegas builds upon the solid foundation established by Oscar and Carolyn Goodman. As mayoral icons, the Goodmans ushered the city into the 21st century with visionary governance emphasizing economic growth, streamlined city management and robust support for arts and culture.

Oscar's leadership focused on revitalizing the downtown area, transforming it into a vibrant epicenter of commerce and creativity. Carolyn continued this trajectory, championing education initiatives and fostering a dynamic arts scene celebrating Las Vegas' rich cultural diversity. Together, they laid a strong foundation for future leaders, ensuring the city could adapt to global trends while preserving its unique identity.



Above: Shelley Berkley speaks during her confirmation as mayor of Las Vegas



Above: Shelley Berkley with members of the Shelley Berkley Student Council

Recognizing the Goodmans' contributions, Berkley is poised to further their legacy. Her leadership philosophy emphasizes continuity and innovation, ensuring that the city's evolution respects its storied past while embracing its potential future.

Standing on Strong Shoulders

With deep gratitude for the Goodmans' legacy, Shelley steps into her role as a visionary leader determined to amplify Las Vegas' unique attributes. Shelley's commitment to showcasing local talent lies at the heart of her cultural initiatives. "Las Vegas attracts talent from across the globe, but we have a wealth of creativity right here in our community," she notes. Her leadership seeks

to amplify the voices of local artists, create new platforms for showcasing their work and celebrate the city's rich cultural diversity.

Shelley has also advocated for cultural enrichment, emphasizing the importance of the arts in society with her support for the National Endowment for the Arts. "The arts are a reflection of who we are as a society," she has often remarked. "Investing in the arts is investing in our future." This dedication reinforces her vision of a vibrant Las Vegas that values creativity and innovation.

Jan Jones Blackhurst, former mayor of Las Vegas, reflected on Shelley's potential to lead, saying, "Shelley understands this city like few others. Her leadership comes from the heart. She has the tenacity and vision to make Las Vegas a global leader not just in entertainment but in quality of

life." These sentiments encapsulate Shelley's unique ability to honor the city's traditions while charting new paths for its future.

A Visionary Leader for a Thriving City

As mayor, Berkley brings a unique blend of experience, vision and dedication to her role. Her leadership is rooted in a deep understanding of Las Vegas' past and a bold vision for its future. Her plans include creating affordable live/workspaces for artists, fostering opportunities for creatives and championing initiatives like developing a state-of-the-art museum in collaboration with Elaine Wynn.

"Las Vegas attracts so much talent from around the world to entertain, but these people need outlets to fully unleash their creativity so others may enjoy it," Berkley stated. Her commitment to empowering the city's creative community ensures Las Vegas remains a beacon for innovation and cultural vitality.

Bridging Elegance, Progress, and Change

Berkley's leadership embodies the elegance and ingenuity of 1960s Las Vegas while embracing the transformative opportunities of the future. Her ability to balance economic growth with community needs reflects a deep understanding of the city's complexities. Las Vegas, much like Berkley herself, thrives on an embrace of change. It welcomes bold imaginations, new ideas and people with big dreams. A town built on possibilities, it's a city where diversity is celebrated and innovation thrives.

As the city continues evolving into the world's arts, entertainment, gaming and sports capital, it remains a beacon of light in the Mojave

Desert—beckoning all to make their mark and leave a lasting legacy. Berkley embodies this spirit of progress and inclusivity. By fostering sustainability and innovation, she's creating a legacy that honors the city's storied past while charting an ambitious path forward. Her vision positions her as the ideal steward to amplify Las Vegas' prosperity and ensure its bright future.

The Role of Arts and Culture in Las Vegas' Identity

Berkley's vision for Las Vegas goes beyond economic metrics. Her initiatives to amplify the city's arts and culture scene reflect a broader understanding of its identity. Through projects like live/work housing for creatives and a planned museum, she fosters an environment where creativity thrives.

"The arts serve as one of the greatest educational resources we have in society," Berkley explained. "When we allow young people to explore arts and culture, the impact of that exposure will not only support their personal development but also spark their ingenuity."

Berkley sees the city as a living canvas where artistic expression and technological innovation intersect to create an environment of boundless possibility. Her plans to collaborate with local and global artists to elevate Las Vegas' cultural profile are designed to ensure that creativity remains at the heart of its growth.

Nurturing Community and Opportunity

Her dedication to fostering inclusivity exemplifies Berkley's profound connection to the community. She often recalls the lessons learned from her father's days in the Copa

Room, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and compassion. Her vision for a unified Las Vegas integrates the glamour of its golden era with the progressive values of today, ensuring the city remains vibrant, innovative and welcoming to all.

Her efforts extend to initiatives that support small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures, recognizing their role in driving economic prosperity. Berkley envisions Las Vegas as a hub of opportunity for residents from all backgrounds to thrive.

A Legacy of Impact

Berkley's life and career are deeply intertwined with the narrative of Las Vegas. Her dedication to education, health care and culture reflects her belief in the transformative power of service. As mayor, she

stands poised to lead the city into an era of unprecedented growth and opportunity.

Her journey from a young girl inspired by the neon lights of the desert to a trailblazing leader mirrors the spirit of Las Vegas itself—a city that thrives on reinvention and boundless ambition. Berkley's legacy is one of resilience, compassion and a relentless drive to give back to the community she loves. In her hands, the future of Las Vegas shines as brightly as its storied past, promising a new era of prosperity, innovation and inclusivity.

As the neon glow of Las Vegas continues to light up the desert sky, Berkley's leadership ensures it remains a beacon of hope, creativity and boundless possibility for generations to come.



Above: Shelley Berkley with members of The Dancing Dreydels at the Menorah lighting at Fremont Street Experience on Dec. 26, 2024



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DESERT QUILTERS

KEEPING NEVADA IN STITCHES

By Kendall Hardin / Photography courtesy of Desert Quilters of Nevada

Desert Quilters of Nevada (DQN), the first and largest quilt guild in Southern Nevada, was formed to promote, encourage and preserve the art of quilt-making by developing an appreciation for fine quilts. It sponsors and supports quilting activities, teaching techniques, the history of quilting and the future of modern quilt expressions.

Stitching Together a Patchwork for the Future

DQN was a dream of Nancy Walters of Las Vegas and Alice Godwin of Boulder City. Groups of quilters had been meeting informally in small sewing circles for years. DQN was organized to share quilting ideas, methods and experiences with other quilters. The goal was to expand on these ideas and to grow throughout the state of Nevada. An admirable side effect of the guild has been to help the unfortunate and support our country's men and women serving in the military.

Although women had been meeting in quilt groups since 1985, DQN was formed in 1986 and elected Godwin as its first president.

Monthly quilt meetings were set for Las Vegas and Boulder City, with \$1.50 per quarter dues and an active newsletter. By the end of 1986,



there were 75 quilters in seven active circles. The club created quilt squares and "raffle quilts" to raise funds for the guild, as well as a 16-foot quilt for the play "The Quilter" presented by theatre students at UNLV.

Today's Desert Quilters 40 Years Later

Today, the guild has more than 470 members from 14 states. DQN's

Above: "Norma" by Clarice Dean (Representational)

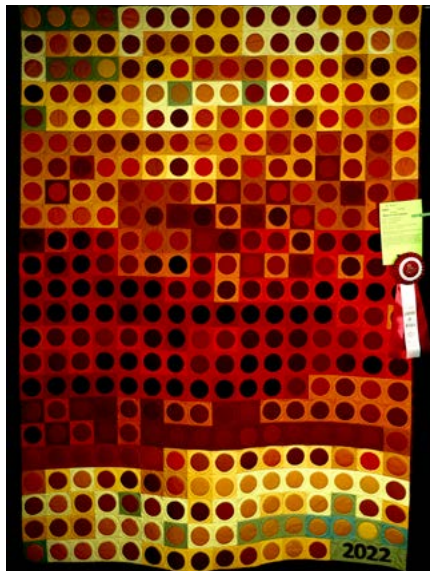
quilters attract all age groups, with some of its illustrious members in their 90s! The nonprofit organization has drawn from its own creative artisans and world-renowned practitioners to teach innovative and time-tested quilting tips and ideas.

Among DQN's members are established pattern makers, book writers

and quilters who travel around the country to teach and mentor. Many of its master quilters have been profiled in national publications. Their exquisite creations have garnered top awards in prestigious national and regional quilt shows and Las Vegas at the guild's annual quilt show in March.

DQN members have quilted for their families, friends, church groups and those serving in the armed forces, as well as their four-legged friends, homeless folks, street teens, cancer patients and hospital babies. Rarely do they finish one project without another one or two projects waiting in the wings.

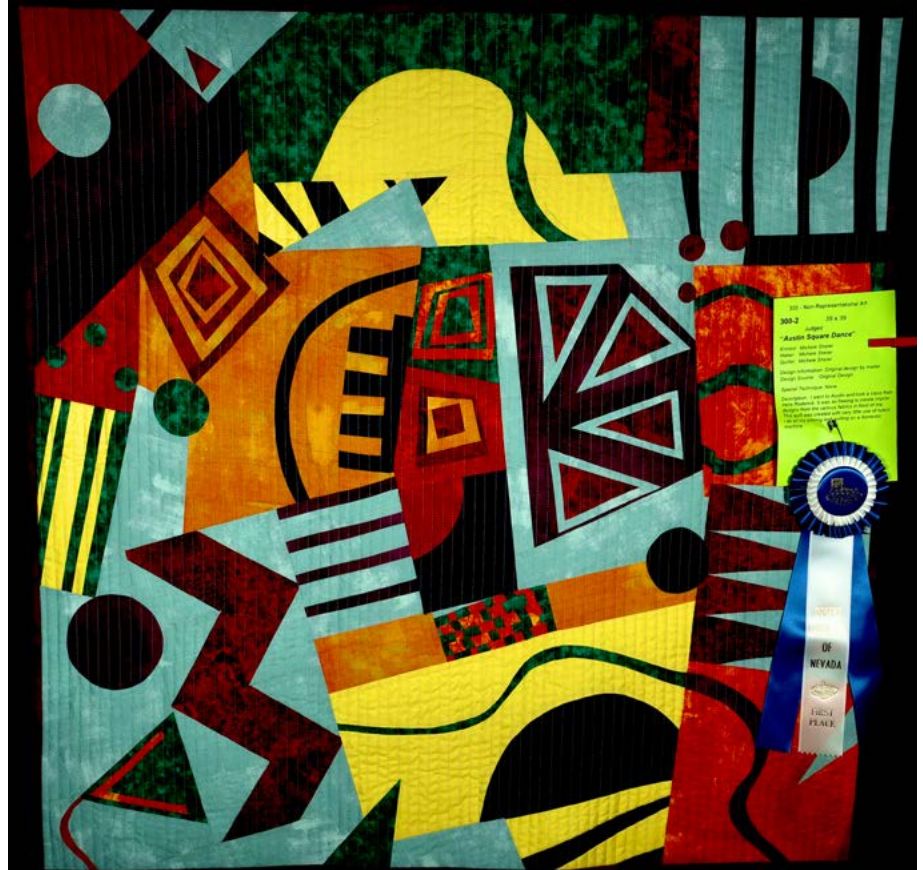
In addition to many charity quilt projects, the organization supports the Quilts of Valor local chapter, which honors all military men and women who have served our country and their family members as an exemplary, ongoing community service project.



Above: "Baby It's Hot Outside" by Jean McElherne (Modern)

Top Right: "Tula" by Madonna Sanpei (Pieced Quilt)

Right: "Austin Square Dance" by Michele Sherer (Non-Representational)





Today, the DQN guild includes not just quilters. It also welcomes jewelry makers, clay modelers, doll makers, basket weavers and contemporary artists who teach us that anything can be used in extraordinary fiber artwork.

"Many of us have watched as the guild grew exponentially," cited Jeanne Spala, the guild's current president. "Desert Quilters is a gathering place to make lifelong friends while making, admiring and enjoying quilts and fiber art creations. DQN provides a comfortable home for extraordinary artisans and crafters to share their love for an art form that has withstood the ages."

Celebrating Traditions and Accomplishments

DQN's mission is to promote and preserve the art of quilting, patchwork, applique and related fiber arts. To that end, the guild sponsors workshops, displays, projects and opportunities for individuals to meet and exchange ideas about quilting and fiber arts.

The first three presidents were founding members, including Godwin, Maxine James and Ann Pugh. Since its origin, 24 presidents have presided over DQN's four decades of evolution. Among the guild's many offerings are:

- **Circles** - small quilter groups throughout the Las Vegas Valley, like the Boulder City Cut-Ups, Finishing Stitches and Loose Threads, who congregate every month

Top: "Zig Zaggy" by Vicki Ruebel & Judy Dale (Modern)



Left: "Ancient Mariner" by Marilyn Gourley (Representational)

- **National and International Quilter Visits** - like the recent lectures and workshops with Australian Lisa Mattock ("Slow Stitching") and Californian Jean Impey ("The Magic of Fabulous Faces")
- **Day Trips** - like the Road2California spring bus trip to visit the Quilter's Conference & Showcase in Ontario
- **Let's Learn** - a new series of workshops taught by DQN members for members to create together and forge new friendships
- **DQN Marketplace** - the guild's online source for sale and free items (from sewing machines to long-arm quilting service), as well as the go-to spot for quilting referrals
- **DQN Sew Days** - with open sew days and workshops for youths and adults at local fabric stores and Enterprise Library
- **Annual Quilt Exhibition** - showcasing 200 judged and 50 non-judged quilts, all by local DQN members

DQN members have established a stellar reputation, capturing top awards in such prestigious shows as the American Quilter's Society (AQS) QuiltWeek, QuiltCon, the Pacific International Quilt Festival (PIQF) in Santa Clara and the International Quilt Festival in Houston, the largest competition in the country.

Anniversary Celebrations: DQN's Event Theme of the Year

Warning: If we're not careful to preserve the techniques of our forebearers, quilting may become a lost art.

DQN's annual quilt show aims to solve the "lost" part of that warning and boldly emphasize the "art" aspect, as sewers display some 250

of their best works. Showcasing quilting styles from around the globe, the quilts on display demonstrate the finest local instances of expression through fabric, thread and embellishment—a stunning, inspiring exhibition of skill and creativity.

This year's show highlights select pieces for sale, alongside a special "40th Anniversary Overview" of the quilting genre for those new to the art form—to inspire artists of all ages to fabricate their own future show entries. For a nominal fee, attendees can win one of many baskets created for hands-on sewers and crafters.

Cindy Erickson, a certified quilt judge, will adjudicate this year's "Anniversary Celebrations" exhibition, surrounded by vendors

assembled to demonstrate traditional and state-of-the-art materials and equipment. Local food trucks will provide tasty refreshments and libations for everyone in the crowd. So don't miss this extraordinary event, "where all the pieces magically come together!"

Desert Quilters 40th Anniversary Show

March 21: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
March 22: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Whitney Ranch Recreation Center
1575 Galleria Drive
Henderson, NV 89014

For more information on DQN or to purchase tickets for the anniversary show, visit www.dqnv.org.



Above: Quilt of Valor "Larry's Journey" by Brenda Varney. Photo by Kendall Hardin



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VEGAS PBS KIDS WRITERS CONTEST PRESENTED BY JANICE ALLEN CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Article and Photography by Sharon Chayra

Las Vegas may have global name recognition, but it's not necessarily recognized from a child's view. This is why Vegas PBS President Mare Mazur prioritizes creating a "sense of belonging" in the station's many endeavors. What good is community building if not for ensuring the most vulnerable or marginalized individuals have a voice?

Vegas PBS Ready To Learn (RTL)

Above: Siblings Marcy and Morris Brown, former winners of the Vegas PBS KIDS Writers Contest Presented by Janice Allen, proudly display their trophies earned in 2002-2007

focuses on early childhood education, with a foundation of literacy central to its mission. It's woven into every word in the tens of thousands of books the program distributes annually, every family engagement workshop, and the station's countless community events such as Be My Neighbor Day and the Vegas PBS KIDS Writers Contest Presented by Janice Allen. After all, future storytellers need to start somewhere.

Ready To Learn Fuels Imaginations

Jessica Russell, Vegas PBS Ready To Learn coordinator, leads the

lion's share of activities and events geared at engaging children. "The mission of PBS KIDS is to deliver high-quality educational media that helps children develop the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills they need to thrive," Russell explains. "Ready To Learn is a boots-on-the-ground initiative that brings learning to life in communities through hands-on activities and family engagement — all powered by PBS KIDS media."

Over the 24 years since Russell joined the station, she has devoted 12 of those as the visionary and ambassador, leading this charge. In



Above: Jessica Russell, Vegas PBS Ready To Learn coordinator, poses with Blake Eecklor, one of the former winners of the Vegas PBS KIDS Writers Contest Presented by Janice Allen

2025, the program will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Vegas PBS KIDS Writers Contest Presented by Janice Allen. Vegas PBS is reflecting on the accomplishments of the contest's many participants, especially

the young writers who won. Allen, a Las Vegas philanthropist and former journalist, created an endowment to ensure this program will continue for many years.

Writing Contest Winners: Marcy and Morris Brown

Entering a writing contest in kindergarten isn't a particularly normal activity. When most children are

still learning to tie their shoelaces, five-year-old Morris Brown was trying to keep up with his big sister, Marcy. Even at the age of eight, she was a prolific reader and writer. Morris wanted to be just like her. Fortunately, through Vegas PBS, Morris did just that. His story, "The Komodo Dragon Who Helped Me with My Science Project," won him the top prize in his age group as a student at Challenger School in 2005. He also competed in second grade and third grade and won both times.

"My mom was super active with us and academically focused," says Morris. "We didn't really watch TV except for Vegas PBS, and only then to watch 'Reading Rainbow.'" The national public television show "Reading Rainbow," hosted by LeVar Burton, inspired their mother to have her kids participate in the youth writing contest hosted by Vegas PBS. Marcy, with her penchant for storytelling, couldn't wait to enter.

"When I was young, I loved coming up with stories to expand upon and explain everything I saw around me, usually related to the natural world," she explains. Her winning book in 2002, "The Coconut Crab," was largely based on the adventures she and her brother enjoyed while exploring the diverse flora and fauna of Hawaii, their mother's home state.

Writing Contest Winner: Blake Eecklor

Another former contest winner is Blake Eecklor. As a first grader in her mother's class at Heckethorn Elementary, Eecklor remembers her self-determination to "do hard things."

Participating in the writing contest may have been a class project, but Eecklor's curiosity inspired her



Left: Ann Parenti and Chanelle Hayes of Chic Compass smile for the camera at Vegas PBS' Special Needs Resource Library, the site of the Vegas PBS KIDS Writers Contest Presented by Janice Allen 25th-anniversary video shoot

Below: Vegas PBS President Mare Mazur

medical documentation as a set medic for film, TV and music videos. Both Browns acknowledge winning the writing contest as an important win in their lives.

Eecklor, with sights set on working for NASA or SpaceX, says establishing an early writing habit opened the door for her to expand her creativity. While pursuing a physics degree, Eecklor also runs track, plays the flute and still finds time for a social life. Early literacy established a foundation that she acknowledges provided her with being "able to

charming tale, "The Perfect Me," in 2013. The story was about a little girl's crisis with self-identity that caused the character to change her name daily, resulting in chaos. Ultimately, she realized that just being herself was perfect. The allegory isn't lost on Eecklor, whose aspirations landed her as a freshman at Pepperdine University, where she studies physics.

Her mother, Lynne, continues to teach first grade and encourages her students to enter the writing contest. She's seen firsthand the positive impact of the writing contest on her daughter and many other children.

Literacy's Lifelong Impact

For Marcy and Morris Brown, the sibling competitiveness of yesteryear has been replaced with maturity and mutual admiration. Morris proudly exclaims, "I'm so proud of my big sister. She is amazing and brilliant!" Marcy blushes and counters with equally sincere praise of her kid brother. Today, Marcy uses her storytelling skills to design tabletop gameplay initiatives that educate children on the importance of stewarding the earth's environmental

resources. She also serves as a storyteller docent around the southwest, including Las Vegas. Morris earned his degree in business but finds his passions best expressed in creating music as well as writing



think more outside of the box when it comes to doing things in physics and school like we're building something for an experiment, or even when trying to solve an equation. I feel that this all stems from the very basics of creativity, coming from impactful moments such as writing for this contest when I was very young."

25 Years and Counting

Russell notes that Vegas PBS has received more than 18,000 stories since the inception of its annual writing contest. The 2025 Vegas PBS KIDS Writers Contest Presented by Janice Allen is accepting entries now through March 14, 2025. The contest is open to all Clark, Nye, White Pine and Lincoln counties students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

The contest's 25th anniversary is especially meaningful. Russell reflects:



"Research consistently shows that PBS KIDS media moves the needle in early learning outcomes, setting children on the path to success. With the support of generous sponsors like Janice Allen, we're able to

sustain and grow meaningful programs, such as our PBS KIDS Writers Contest, that directly benefit children across Southern Nevada. Without this crucial support, especially from partners like Janice, we couldn't offer the vital learning resources and opportunities that empower children—particularly those in underserved communities—to thrive."

Creating opportunities for children to thrive in a city designed for adults may seem a challenge, but for Mazur, Russell and the many partners of Vegas PBS, they know that if given the right elements for success, the next Dante or Dickinson may just be an entry away.

For more information, visit www.vegaspbs.org/writers-contest/.

Above: Blake Eecklor, former writing contest winner and now a freshman at Pepperdine University, proudly poses for the camera with the trophy she won in 2013

Left: "The Perfect Me" by Blake Eecklor





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ABOUT TOWN

Chic Compass Magazine Launch Party at Rita Deanin Abbey Art Museum

(Photography by Jaime Lim)

Right: (L-R) Laura Sanders, Jason Gould, David Tupaz, Laura Henkel

Below: Charcuterie display by the Jones family



Above: (L-R) Stacey Gualandi, Nancy Chin-Wagner

Left: (L-R) Ann Parenti, Jason Gould, Lynette Chappell, Robert Dolan



**Chic Compass Magazine
Launch Party (cont.)**

(Photography by Sheryl Aronson/
Sasaphotos)

Above: (L-R) Marilyn Mercer, Sherry
Gordy

Above Right: Tony Pearson

Right: Sonya Coleman, Brian G.
Thornton

Below: (L-R) Claire Nagel, Cindy
Fox, Stacey Gualandi

Below Right: (L-R) Ann Parenti,
Kendall Hardin





Youth for Youth Holiday Concert
 (Photography by Cashman Photo)

Above Left: (L-R) Stacey Gualandi, Santa Claus
Above: Skai Jones

Left: (L-R) Savannah Downey, Skai Jones, Jun Hong, Charles Hong, Isabella Kim, Jenny Jian

Below Left: Savannah Downey (violin), Roxy Jones (piano)

Below: Roxy Jones





Youth for Youth Holiday Concert (cont.)

Above: (L-R) Stacey Gualandi, Ryan Ershagi, Angelina Dang, Arash Salehi

Below: (L-R) Charles Hong, Jun Hong

Bottom: Silent Auction and Welcome Reception



Above: Auction Christmas tree donated by Roman Inc.

Below: Alexander Vakov





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