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VOLUME 8 | EDITION 1



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# From the Editor

---

A new year brings change, and with it, we welcome the first edition of 2026. The start of a new chapter always invites reflection as we think about what we're starting, what we're letting go of and what we're carrying forward. New beginnings rarely arrive with fireworks. More often, they show up in small decisions, consistent work and the choice to keep going when the future isn't completely clear.

That persistence is exactly why Robert Dolan and Cashman Photo feel so right for this season. In a city like Las Vegas that's always reinventing itself, Cashman Photo has remained a constant, built on the simple idea of showing up and paying attention. For more than 60 years, Dolan and his team have focused not only on the big moments but also on the everyday ones that quietly shape the city. His approach isn't about chasing trends. It's about moving forward while protecting what matters most: the people, the history and the trust built over decades.

In this issue, we also highlight Alan Cumming, who reflects on new creative chapters and the power of self-reflection, while John Parenti shows what long-term reinvention really looks like — from a kid with a snare drum to songwriter, producer and now founder of a record label. We also get an exclusive interview with WWE Superstar Chelsea Green, who shares her journey back to the ring, proving that one chapter doesn't define the rest of your story. You'll also read a deeply emotional essay from *Chic Compass* writer Laura Henkel on grace, reminding us that care and showing up day after day can transform both a life and a heart. We also spotlight the life and career of Laura McKenzie, whose path from self-taught musician to television host and producer shows that reinvention comes from adaptability and staying true to your creative roots.

In Las Vegas, the Arts District is buzzing with possibilities this season thanks to the THIRD Street project. It gives artists a place to create, take risks and grow while building a community where creativity fuels connection and opportunity, which you'll read all about in this issue. We also shine the light on Leaders in Training, a community-based nonprofit based in East Las Vegas, helping first-generation youth do the same by teaching them how to show up, stay the course and imagine leadership in their own way.



**Chanelle Hayes-Sessions**  
EDITOR

As always, our compass takes you around the world. We head to Quito for Art Hearts Fashion's first runway show in Ecuador, then to Beverly Hills to talk with James Cameron about "Avatar: Fire and Ash" and Miley Cyrus, who has a powerful connection to the film. In Dallas, we explore the culinary delights of Crown Block from Elizabeth Blau and chef Kim Canteenwalla of Blau & Associates. Back in Las Vegas, we visit *Odyssey Noir* at AREA15, step inside *The Cabinet of Curiosities* at Horseshoe Las Vegas with mixologist Daniel Ponsky, who shows another side of Las Vegas cocktail culture and check out the latest beauty tech from CES 2026. We also take a look at how inflation has affected everyday Americans over the past five years.

We hope you enjoy this issue, packed with powerful stories of reinvention, creativity and resilience. Take a moment to ask yourself: What does this year hold for you, and how are you ready to reinvent yourself? Here's to fresh starts, unwavering dedication and the courage to keep building — for yourself, your community and the world around you.

*Chanelle Hayes-Sessions*

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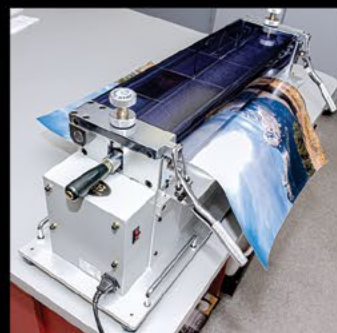
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# CASHMAN PHOTO: A CITY REMEMBERED THROUGH LIGHT, TIME AND HUMAN PRESENCE

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By Laura Henkel

*I*n a city that has mastered the art of reinvention, memory is crucial in defining the future, a fragile thing.

Las Vegas is often described through spectacle — neon glare, desert heat, chance and excess — but beneath its mythos lies a quieter, more enduring story. It is a story written not only in architecture and entertainment but in faces, gestures, storefronts, celebrations and ordinary moments that once passed unnoticed. Few institutions have been as central to preserving this lived history as Cashman Photo.

For decades, Cashman Photo has served as more than a photography studio or commercial imaging business. It has functioned as an unofficial visual archive of Southern Nevada, capturing the city as it grew from a desert outpost into a global destination. Through its lenses passed performers and politicians, families and workers, Strip legends and

Westside neighbors. Together, these images form a collective memory of Las Vegas — not the fantasy it sells but the reality it lived.

## **A Family Enterprise Rooted in Community**

Cashman Photo was founded by Morgan and Harris Cashman with Morty Gotlieb on the beaches of Miami Beach in the late 1950s and 1960s. Miami at this time was the city of movie stars, fabulous and historic hotels and presidents, just to name a few. At the invitation of Jay Sarno, they were invited to come to Las Vegas to possibly duplicate what they were doing in Miami, which was taking photos in high-end hotel restaurants and showrooms. The rest is history as Cashman Photo began taking photos on Aug. 5, 1966, the opening day of Caesars Palace. They were incorporated in Las Vegas in 1966 and thus the journey began.

Cashman Photo emerged during a pivotal moment in Las Vegas history. The city was transitioning from its early frontier identity into a modern entertainment capital, fueled by postwar growth, expanding tourism and an increasingly sophisticated cultural scene.

Morgan and Harris recognized early that Las Vegas required documentation on its own terms. While national media focused on the Strip's glamour, Cashman Photo quietly recorded the city's human infrastructure — the weddings and retirements, corporate milestones, charity galas, civic ceremonies, graduations and backstage moments that shaped daily life.

From its earliest days, Cashman Photo operated with a rare duality: commercial precision paired with cultural sensitivity. The company grew to serve major casinos, corporations and institutions yet maintained deep relationships with families, nonprofits and local organizations.



*Above Center: (L-R) Morty Gottlieb, Morgan Cashman, Harris Cashman*

This balance allowed Cashman Photo to move fluidly between worlds, documenting both the polished and the personal.

As the company matured, this ethos did not dissipate. Instead, it was carried forward, strengthened and refined by those who understood that Cashman Photo was not simply capturing assignments and long-lasting memories but safeguarding history.

### **Photographing a City in Motion**

Las Vegas is not static and neither has been the work of Cashman Photo. Over the decades, the company's archives have mirrored the city's transformations — from Rat Pack-era cool to corporate mega-resorts, from downtown grit to suburban sprawl.

Photographs captured entertainers mid-performance and moments after the curtain fell. They chronicled the rise of legendary venues, the evolution of casino design and the subtle shifts in fashion, technology and taste. But perhaps most importantly, they memorialized the people who made Las Vegas function: dealers, stagehands, hotel staff, educators, activists, artists and entrepreneurs.

It was during this era of rapid growth and transformation that Robert Dolan, the founders and team emerged as a defining presence within Cashman Photo. Joining the company as Las Vegas accelerated toward global prominence, they became deeply involved in shaping how the city was visually recorded. His work and leadership coincided with decades when the stakes of documentation were higher than ever — when entire neighborhoods, venues and cultural eras could vanish almost overnight.

These images challenge the misconcep-

tion that Las Vegas exists solely as spectacle. They reveal a working city — one built by labor, creativity and community — where culture is not confined to the Strip but embedded in neighborhoods, institutions and relationships.

### **The Camera as Cultural Witness**

Photography, at its best, is not merely documentation; it is interpretation. Cashman Photo's longevity has allowed it to witness patterns and cycles that short-term observers miss. The company's archives capture generational change — children photographed at school events who later appear at professional milestones, performers who evolve from newcomers to icons and civic leaders whose public service reshaped the region.

Under Dolan's stewardship, this long view became intentional. He understood instinctively that the true value of



*Above: Just a few of the thousands of artists Cashman Photo has worked with*

an image often reveals itself years — or decades — later. His approach emphasized consistency, context and return: photographing the same institutions and individuals over time, allowing visual narratives to emerge organically.

Through consistent presence, Cashman

Photo became trusted. That trust is visible in the images themselves: relaxed postures, unguarded expressions, moments of authenticity that arise only when subjects feel seen rather than staged.

In this way, Cashman Photo did more than record events. It shaped how Las Vegas remembers itself.

## **Entertainment, Yes — But Also Humanity**

Las Vegas is synonymous with entertainment and Cashman Photo's archive is rich with legendary performers, headline acts and cultural milestones. From showroom performances to celebrity portraits, these images trace the evolution of entertainment from intimate



lounge acts to global residencies.

Dolan and the incredible team's work during these decades reflects a deep understanding of entertainment as a labor of professionalism and love as much as spectacle. His lens often turned toward rehearsal rooms, technical crews, transitional spaces and moments between performances — those liminal spaces where glamour gives way to effort.

Yet what distinguishes Cashman Photo is its refusal to reduce entertainment to celebrity alone. The camera documented the collaborative ecosystem behind performance, honoring stagehands, costume designers, musicians and production teams whose contributions rarely reached the spotlight.

This approach aligns Cashman Photo with a broader arts tradition: recognizing

that culture is not only what dazzles but what sustains.

### **Civic Life and the Architecture of Belonging**

Beyond entertainment, Cashman Photo has long documented civic life in Southern Nevada. Political inaugurations, community fundraisers, nonprofit



*Above: Caesars Palace photographers in the 1970s, called Camera Girls back then but now known as photographers*

milestones, educational achievements and cultural festivals all passed through its lens.

Dolan played a crucial role in ensuring that this civic documentation remained rigorous and continuous. At a time when commercial photography increasingly prioritized speed and disposability, he maintained an ethic of presence and responsibility. He recognized that civic images — often understated in the moment — would later serve as vital historical records.

These photographs form an invaluable record of how Las Vegas organized itself socially and politically — how

communities advocated for resources, celebrated progress and mourned loss. In times of crisis or change, photography becomes especially powerful, offering continuity when narratives fracture.

For historians, curators and cultural scholars, the Cashman Photo archive is a visual roadmap of Las Vegas' civic evolution.

### **A Multigenerational Legacy**

As the business transitioned across generations, Cashman Photo evolved technologically while maintaining its foundational ethos. The shift from film to digital did not diminish its commitment to quality or context. Instead, it expanded the studio's ability to serve contemporary

needs while safeguarding historical material.

Dolan was instrumental during this transition. Rather than treating technological change as a rupture, he approached it as stewardship. He understood the responsibility inherent in holding decades of negatives, prints and institutional memory — and the importance of ensuring those materials were not lost to obsolescence or neglect.

This balance — innovation paired with respect for legacy — allowed Cashman Photo to remain relevant without severing its roots.

### **Photography as Cultural Infrastructure**

Cities rely on infrastructure we can see — roads, buildings, utilities — but they also depend on invisible systems of memory. Photography is one such system. Without images, history flattens into anecdote or abstraction.

Cashman Photo functioned as a cultural infrastructure for Las Vegas, quietly ensuring that its stories would endure beyond demolition and redevelopment. When properties were imploded, when neighborhoods changed, when institutions closed or transformed, the images remained.

Dolan's long-term vision reinforced this role. He understood that Cashman Photo was not merely reacting to the city's growth — it was stabilizing its memory.

They allow future generations to understand not only what existed but how it felt to be there.

### **The Emotional Weight of Archives**

To encounter the Cashman Photo archive is to experience an emotional geography of Las Vegas. Nostalgia surfaces but so does recognition. The city's past is not distant; it is layered beneath the present.

For longtime residents, these images affirm lived experience. For newcomers, they offer entry into a lineage that precedes them. For artists and writers, the archive becomes a source of inspiration — a reminder that even the most transient places carry deep roots.

The cohesion of this archive — its sense of continuity rather than fragmentation — is inseparable from the stewardship that guided it through decades of change.

### Why Cashman Photo Matters Now

As Las Vegas continues to evolve — embracing new industries, new populations and new cultural identities — the role of historical archives becomes even more vital. The city's future depends, in part, on its ability to remember where it has been.

Cashman Photo's legacy is not confined to the past. It informs how Las Vegas understands itself today: as a city of complexity, resilience, creativity and community. In an age of curated digital personas, its work reminds us of the power of honest observation and sustained presence.

Dolan and the team's contribution sits squarely within this legacy — not as a footnote but as a guardian of continuity during some of the city's most transformative years.

### A City Reflected Back to Itself

Ultimately, Cashman Photo offered Las Vegas something rare: a mirror that did not distort.

Through decades of careful, respectful documentation guided by the founders,

photographers, videographers and stewards who understood the weight of what they were preserving reflected the city back to itself. Its triumphs and transitions, its labor and leisure, its contradictions and continuity all remain visible.

Cashman Photo captured not just what Las Vegas wanted to be seen as but what it actually was.

In doing so, it ensured that Las Vegas would not disappear into its own mythology. It anchored the city in images of real people, real moments and real histories.

After the passing of Morgan and the retirement of his wife, Karen, Dolan embarked on becoming the owner of the

*Below: Cashman Photo debuted at Caesars Palace's opening in 1966 and continues to take and print photos in the same lab nearly 60 years later*





*Above: Cashman Photo corporate office*

company. His deep belief in and gratitude for the team have no bounds. As he often says, "As the owner, I have the privilege and honor of being the steward of not only the legacy of the longevity of the 60 years of the company but more importantly the responsibility and gratitude of the staff and employees that have invested their lives in the building and success of the company. Imagine a company that has staff and employees who have been with the company for 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50 years and up. That is the true legacy, THE PEOPLE."

And that, perhaps, is its greatest contribution: proving that even in a city built on illusion, truth can still be preserved — one photograph at a time.

Robert Dolan and the team are forever grateful to Morgan, Karen and Harris Cashman for the legacy they created and are committed to continuing.



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OBT's Leigh Goldberger and Ben Youngstone. Photo by Christopher Peddecord. Photos courtesy of Oregon Ballet Theatre.

# LAURA MCKENZIE: FROM MUSICAL BEGINNINGS TO TELEVISION TRAILBLAZER — A LEGACY OF CREATIVITY, COMPASSION AND COMMUNITY

By Sheryl Aronson

From her early days as a self-taught musician to becoming a celebrated television host and producer, Laura McKenzie has left an indelible mark on the travel television genre and the cultural fabric of Hollywood. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated creativity, adaptability and a deep commitment to giving back — both on screen and in her community.

McKenzie's career began with music. "I taught myself how to play guitar and sing when I was in high school, and then I joined a band because music was always my passion — something I thought I'd make a career of," she recalls.

She performed in bands at restaurants on weekends, fully committed to music. At her family's urging, she also explored a backup plan, enrolling in dental school to become a hygienist. A fainting incident during a surgical observation changed her mind, and after graduation, she never used her certificate.

A pivotal moment came when her trio opened for The Kingston Trio in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. That led to a full summer on the road, followed by 12 years of touring as a singer. She later joined the Serendipity Singers, a group with several hit records in the 1960s and 1970s, eventually replacing the last original member. The group performed worldwide and starred in a three-year television series for USA



*Above: Photo of Laura McKenzie by James Thompson*



**Above: Laura McKenzie at the first century Garni Temple near Yerevan, Armenia**

**Below: Photo of Laura at a beer garden in Munich, Germany by Jan Becker**

Network, filming music videos at iconic locations.

"We traveled all over the world and did cover songs standing in front of famous places like the pyramids, the Parthenon in Athens and the Sydney Opera House. It was during the MTV years when music videos were popular — so that show was a hit."

After years of touring, McKenzie found her next chapter in television. "Because I had so much experience traveling with the Serendipity Singers, that really prepared me for television," she says.

Her niche in travel programming emerged after moving to Palm Springs, California, where a connection led to a job as a weather presenter. Observing the popularity of short travel segments, she began producing two-minute travel tips for local TV, which were syndicated to multiple stations.

From the start, McKenzie focused on experiences that immersed viewers in local culture rather than traditional sight-seeing. "I always wanted to do things that were fun ... not get bored in museums learning about the history behind this guy and the painting."

Recognizing the potential for longer-form content, she partnered with Republic Pictures to create a library of 12 one-hour travel videos. The series was highly successful, earning McKenzie *Billboard* magazine's "Video of the Decade" award for her Hawaii video, which remained on the special interest chart for 30 weeks. Her videos were available in rental stores before the era of internet downloads.

Her success continued with "Laura McKenzie's Travel Tips," a half-hour series on the Travel Channel, followed by "Laura McKenzie's Round Trip" on the Discovery Channel, leading to numerous additional travel programs.



Wanting to use her platform for humanitarian efforts, McKenzie introduced segments focused on giving back, which she calls "voluntourism." "When we were traveling, there was so much opportunity to give back," she says. "We worked with the Starkey Hearing Foundation and helped give hearing aids to children who had never heard before. We took propane tanks to Nicaragua, did a charity concert in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina and traveled to Africa with Feed the Children and took some celebrities with us."

McKenzie often brought her daughter, Elizabeth Stanton, on these trips, believing volunteering would help shape her into a thoughtful and compassionate person. She appeared in family segments, sometimes as the adventurous "guinea pig," trying new activities on camera. After a trip to Africa, McKenzie helped her create a demo pilot, which launched "Elizabeth Stanton's Great Big World." The program has been syndicated for more than 10 years, allowing viewers to watch her grow from a child into a successful host.

"Today, Elizabeth continues her career in entertainment, hosting shows for The CW network such as 'Street Magic,' which features magicians performing for crowds, and 'World's Funniest Animals,' a lighthearted series where her own

dogs have even appeared as co-hosts," McKenzie says.

Family collaboration has remained central to McKenzie's work. "My husband, David McKenzie, is also a well-known producer-director and an Emmy Award-winning, Oscar-nominated producer," she says. "We run Associated Television, a syndication and production company together — so everything is family. We travel together and work together. I know a lot of people who can't work with their husbands and wives — but we make it work."

Another creative focus has been documentary filmmaking. "We produced an Emmy-winning documentary called 'Hate Among Us,' about antisemitism, which we filmed in Israel, Paris and Morocco with my co-producers Dean Cain and Montel Williams," she says. "We also produced 'Architects of Denial,' about the Armenian genocide. After that, my husband received a presidential award, and Dean, Montel and I received the Order of Armenia, which was a lovely award from the government."

One of McKenzie's most visible community roles is leading the Hollywood Christmas Parade. After years of attending as a spectator, she and her family stepped in when the original organizers could no longer continue. Under her guidance, the parade expanded to include two performance stages, celebrity entertainment, marching bands and towering balloons. She co-hosts the event with Erik Estrada and other personalities, while her daughter reports from the crowd.

The parade also celebrates cultural diversity. "We have the Gevorkian Dance Academy representing Armenia and the Armenian community in Hollywood, floats from Panama, dancers from Bolivia, huge spectacles from China and Korea, and we even had Miss European Universe there wearing her crown, waving to the crowd to represent Europeans."

In addition, the Hollywood Christmas



Parade is a platform for giving back. "We support the Marine Toys for Tots — their mission is to make sure that no child is forgotten at Christmas time, that every child wakes up to a toy or a gift Christmas morning. But what a lot of people don't realize is that the Marine Toys for Tots is a year-round program as well, not just Christmas."

Reflecting on the event's impact, McKenzie shares, "It's really a community event — everyone who came out this past year said they couldn't believe how many people were on the street. People come out with their families, bring folding chairs, sit there and wave, and see their favorite soap stars, celebrities, balloons and marching bands. It's so heartwarming."

Although still deeply involved in Hollywood production, McKenzie moved to Las Vegas more than five years ago, just ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic. "I love having access to amazing restaurants and designers

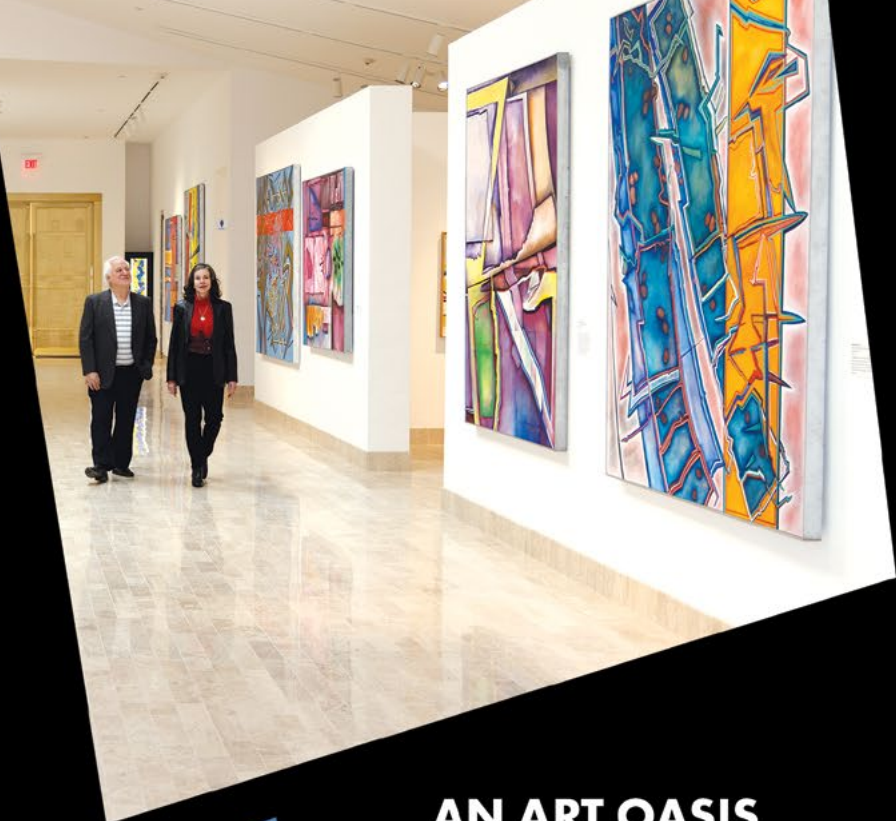
*Above: Photo of Erik Estrada and Laura McKenzie at the Hollywood Christmas Parade by Sheryl Aronson (Sasaphotos)*

within a short drive," she says. "World-class entertainment is available every night, it's easy to get around, and I enjoy the sports scene and outdoor adventures. I also love discovering places off the Strip and am a big fan of the restaurants at the newer Durango Casino & Resort."

Through all her work, McKenzie encourages others to broaden their perspectives and give back. Her guiding philosophy remains simple: "Be more considerate, kind and generous — Be grateful for everything that we have."

With her television series, documentaries and family-run production company, McKenzie has built a lasting legacy of storytelling that entertains, educates and inspires viewers to see the world — and one another — with greater empathy and curiosity.

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# RUNNING IT BACK

## WWE SUPERSTAR CHELSEA GREEN ON WRESTLEMANIA'S EXCITING RETURN TO LAS VEGAS

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By Heather Turk / Photography courtesy of WWE

On April 18 and 19, WrestleMania returns to Las Vegas after last year's event at Allegiant Stadium went on to become the most successful event in World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) history. Not only did WrestleMania 41 draw 124,693 fans across two nights, but thousands of fans also attended several other wrestling events held in Las Vegas leading up to and following WWE's annual "Showcase of the Immortals."

Chic Compass recently caught up with one of WWE's most popular Superstars, Chelsea Green, to talk about her aspirations for WrestleMania 42, her career and how WWE hopes to capture lightning in a bottle twice by having the Entertainment Capital of the World host WrestleMania for the second consecutive year.

**Chic Compass:** Around this time last year, we were talking to Bianca Belair about WrestleMania coming back to Las Vegas for the first time in 32 years. Now here we are a year later and WrestleMania is once again returning to the Entertainment Capital of the World. There's a lot of expectation surrounding WrestleMania 42, especially with it being the last WrestleMania in the U.S. for a while since WrestleMania 43 has already been announced for Saudi Arabia. How does WrestleMania top itself this year?



*Above: Chelsea Green began 2026 as both the WWE Women's United States Champion and one-half of the AAA World Mixed Tag Team Champions*



*Above: Chelsea Green prides herself on never wearing the same ring gear twice*

**Chelsea Green:** The best thing about WWE is somehow, some way, when we think that we've done it all, we shatter another glass ceiling. People come from all over the world for WrestleMania, not just for those two nights, but also to experience meeting their favorite Superstars, engaging with other fans and going to other events, including independent promotions. I think now knowing what we know about last year, this year can be WrestleMania times 10.

**Chic Compass:** One of the ways WrestleMania 42 could improve is by having you on the card.

**Chelsea Green:** Well, that's a given.

**Chic Compass:** WrestleMania is known for its grand entrances. You've already worn gear with your face all over it, so how would you top that if you were to compete

this year on "The Grandest Stage of Them All?" Have you given any thought as to who you would want to perform your entrance theme?

**Chelsea Green:** In previous years, we've witnessed so many amazing entrances. Two that were my favorite that I would love to steal from is last year, Tiffany Stratton did kind of a take on Barbie when she was in a box with other holograms. That was absolutely incredible. The second one would be John Cena, when he came out with about a hundred other John Cenases. Oh my gosh, if there's one thing a narcissist loves it's not only to see herself, but a hundred of herself! So that would be absolutely amazing. In terms of music, I would love Cardi B to sing me to the ring. I think that's a perfect collaboration considering she loves a little WWE action.

**Chic Compass:** Last year, there were some rumors when you weren't on the card that maybe you

would be hosting WrestleMania. You are someone who is known for taking every opportunity that you are given and running with it, so if you are left off of the WrestleMania card again this year, would you be open to hosting?

**Chelsea Green:** I actually pitched to host WrestleMania for the past three years, since we did WrestleMania in Los Angeles. I think that would be perfect for my character and my role within the company. I have a million outfit ideas and ridiculous bits that I can do.

**Chic Compass:** Even though you weren't on the card last year, you did compete on the SmackDown before WrestleMania that was held at T-Mobile Arena. What were some of your favorite WrestleMania 41 weekend memories?

**Chelsea Green:** I am always a big fan of the women. Watching someone like Tiffany Stratton come up through the



*Above: Chelsea Green is widely regarded as one of WWE's most entertaining Superstars*

developmental program, be a home-grown talent and watch her reach that pinnacle of her career — WWE Women's Champion at WrestleMania — I think that was an incredible moment to watch. Also, just being a close personal friend of Tiffany, it was really emotional because that truly is the greatest moment in a wrestler's career. So, if it wasn't going to happen for me, I want it to happen to my friends. They deserve it. And I can't forget John Cena's last WrestleMania match.

**Chic Compass:** You are known for empowering your fellow female wrestlers outside of the ring, which is such a contrast to the Karen type of character you play on screen. With fan support for your character

constantly growing, have you given any thought to eventually doing a face (a wrestling term for a good guy) turn with her?

**Chelsea Green:** The one thing that I love about acting — or that I've learned to love, I should say — is I don't necessarily need to be the best wrestler, but I will always strive to be the best entertainer. It might be the outfits that I wear, the jokes that I tell, the bumps that I take or the feuds that I have, but that to me is what resonates with the fans. Since being back in WWE, I've learned that audiences love connecting with you through your character. Although my character is still arrogant, obnoxious and over the top, the fans have somehow bonded with her and learned to love her. So, I think turning face is inevitable. I think the fans have actually done that for me without the company

or myself doing that, and that's a really beautiful thing to not have to change a single thing about the way that you walk to that ring and perform in that ring — that the fans have evolved your character for you.

**Chic Compass:** You have been very vocal in the past about trying to bring back WWE's reality show, "Total Divas." While that hasn't happened yet, you are on Netflix's new reality series, "WWE: Unreal." Can you talk a bit about why you wanted to do that?

**Chelsea Green:** I was sitting at the Salt Lake City airport when I got the call from WWE asking if I would like to be on "Unreal." It was a no-brainer. I had watched "Total Divas" coming up on the independent scene and I was so drawn to it. I thought there was something so



*Above: Not only did WrestleMania 41 generate the largest gate for any event in WWE history, but it also was the most viewed WrestleMania of all time*

special about pulling back the curtain a little bit and letting audiences in on the grind, the hustle and the backstage drama. I just told them that I'm not going to self-edit because I can't stand that. I can't stand watching a reality TV show knowing that someone is predetermining the outcome of the episode. I said, "I'm going to say what I say, I'm going to do what I do, and you guys are going to have to worry about the editing and making sure that I don't do anything that gets me in trouble." Because at the end of the day, I want to bring my most authentic self to "Unreal." If that's talking about me peeing in the ring or being a big loser, I'm okay with that. I think that is the whole purpose for "Unreal."

**Chic Compass:** You have done some acting outside of WWE. Is acting something you would like to do more of in the future?

**Chelsea Green:** I actually just had an amazing audition yesterday for a Christmas movie, so I am doing all I can to make sure that I give 110% of myself to WWE and to wrestling while simultaneously making sure that I fill my cup in other ways with hobbies. Right now, it's acting class, auditions and meeting with directors. I've learned that the more acting classes I take and the more I fill my cup with character work outside of WWE, the more my in-ring work thrives. I think it goes hand in hand. I would love to be the first true female crossover talent between Hollywood and wrestling.

**Chic Compass:** You've been very successful in the business ever

since returning to WWE in 2023, including becoming the first-ever WWE Women's United States Champion and one-half of the AAA World Mixed Tag Team Champions with Ethan Page. What's been the proudest moment of your career so far?

**Chelsea Green:** I actually had my proudest moment last year when my WWE replica hat came out on wweshop.com. It's funny because it seems like such a small thing when you look at the grand scale of the titles, the matches that I've been in and the WrestleMania that I've been a part of, but that to me was a culmination of all of my hard work, my character and the effort that I put into my gear. For WWE to deem little old me worthy of having a hat that we can now sell on the shop and in venues for kids to come up and

buy, it's just the most amazing, rewarding feeling.

**Chic Compass: Have you had a favorite opponent over the years?**

**Chelsea Green:** I think this is going to surprise people, but Michin and I have a really unique bond. We started at TNA (Total Nonstop Action Wrestling) at the same time and we had a very similar journey. We were actually released from WWE at the same time and rehired at the same time. We have what we like to call in-ring telepathy with each other, and if you watch our matches back, we have had it since my debut in TNA all the way up until our feud for the WWE Women's United States title and after. There is something that just clicks when we get in the ring together, and I don't think there's a more fun opponent to be in the ring with than someone that you have this unspoken connection and trust with.

**Chic Compass: You mentioned your release with WWE back in 2021. You famously texted Triple H, WWE's chief content officer, saying you wanted your job back. Which other wrestlers released from the company do you think deserve another chance to shine?**

**Chelsea Green:** Definitely Indi Hartwell, Steph De Lander and The IIconics. Of course, I'm only thinking about the girls that I love, but they're such hard workers. They're all on the independent scene and in TNA absolutely killing it. They're evolving and growing, and that's what WWE needs to see when you get released. They need to see that you are going to do everything you can to continue to build your brand so that when they bring you back, you are an even bigger Superstar than they had set the stage for you to be.

**Chic Compass: Your husband, Matt Cardona, recently made his return to WWE. Now that the two of you are in the same company again, could you ever see your on-screen personas teaming up like in the past?**

**Chelsea Green:** I absolutely could, but you have to remember, I live with this man. I travel with this man. I do everything with him. I work out with him. We eat breakfast, lunch and dinner together. That's a lot when you also add in working together. So, I wouldn't turn down the opportunity to be with him, but sometimes absence makes the heart grow fonder — so let's not push it.

**Chic Compass: Taking your husband winning the Intercontinental Championship at WrestleMania 32 off the table, what's your favorite WrestleMania memory?**

**Chelsea Green:** I would have to say my very first WrestleMania back with the company, WrestleMania 39. I could not believe that I was chosen to be put in a multi-woman tag match. Not only that, but I had actually changed tag partners about three times in a week. It was the craziest, most hectic week — I was with Carmella one day, Piper Niven another and then I ended up walking onto that WrestleMania stage with Sonya Deville. That began our incredible tag team run where we ended up winning the tag championships. I think that was just a really special moment for me because it felt full circle. It felt like everything I had done over the previous 10 years was just for that moment to come back to a company that I had dreamt of working for and I had so many ups and downs with, then to only be about three to four months in the company and have an opportunity like that was really special. But I will say that moment of Zack Ryder (Cardona's character name back then) winning the IC title as I was lying in my hotel bedroom watching him win it — not knowing that he was the man I was going to marry — was also quite iconic.

**Chic Compass: I know Vegas holds a special spot in your heart since you got married here. What are some of your favorite things to do whenever you are in town?**

**Chelsea Green:** I got married at the Tropicana, which is now going to be your new MLB stadium. So, I need to

say when that's built, you have to go to the MLB stadium and you might need to have a little wobbly pop (Canadian slang for beer) for me in honor of my wedding venue being torn down. But I love to go bopping around the city, stopping at the cocktail bars, exploring the casinos and people watching. That's my favorite thing to do.

**Chic Compass: The Road to WrestleMania is always full of surprises and we've already seen several Superstars from NXT (WWE's developmental brand) get called up to the main roster recently. Who else would you like to see get called up to Raw or SmackDown soon?**

**Chelsea Green:** Well, of course I'm actively working to get my AAA World Mixed Tag Team partner, Ethan Page, called up. That man is so extremely talented. When he comes up to the main roster, which inevitably he will, he's going to blow everyone away with just the way that his mind works. Aside from that, I'm a girl's girl. I want to see Jacy Jayne called up. I want to see Fallon Henley, Kelani Jordan, Tatum Paxley and Izzi Dame called up. The list goes on because I think NXT, if it isn't the number one brand for females, it definitely has some of the most insanely talented women that I've ever seen in the industry in the past 12 years.

**Chic Compass: Finally — and especially for those who maybe went all in on last year's WrestleMania figuring it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience it in Las Vegas — why should fans return to Allegiant Stadium in April for WrestleMania 42?**

**Chelsea Green:** I don't think you can miss this year because we've had so many incredible call-ups from NXT, who knows what the storylines are going to entail? We have new stars on the rise; we have new storylines. We do things bigger, better and bolder every single year. If you miss this one, this could be the greatest WrestleMania of all time!  
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# hope

## ALAN CUMMING ON LIBERACE, TRAITORS AND LIVING YOUR TRUTH

By Stacey Gualandi

To know stage and screen actor Alan Cumming is to love him, his flamboyant fashion style and all of those over-the-top characters he has portrayed during his decades-long career.

It is no wonder his "Shakespeare-quoting Machiavellian fashion diva" host character on the four-year-old competition reality show "The Traitors" has already earned him multiple Emmy Awards. His campy, theatrical persona seems to be a hyperbolic version of himself.

Of course, long before starring in the global hit, the talented Scot won a Tony, BAFTA and Olivier Award for his work, and in January he received his long-overdue star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

"Coming to Hollywood was my second act, and what a second act it was," Cumming said during the ceremony.

Perhaps you know him best from his role in "X2," as a Bond villain in "GoldenEye," on stage in "Macbeth,"

"Hamlet" or "Romeo and Juliet," or as the emcee in "Cabaret." Maybe you remember him more for his turns in "Romy and Michele's High School Reunion" and "Spice World."

Now, Cumming is embracing his third act as the newly named artistic director of the 544-seat Pitlochry Festival Theatre, located in his native Scottish Highlands.

As part of his first season at the helm, he is embracing familiar territory: the flamboyant, over-the-top Las Vegas legend Liberace. Only this time, Cumming is directing.

The play is called "I'll Be Seeing You" by renowned playwright Martin Sherman and stars West End stage legend Sir Simon Russell Beale as Liberace. Irish actor Fra Fee portrays Sherman as a young playwright struggling to create a modern-era play about the famous Mr. Showmanship.

"It's basically as much about the writer as it is about Liberace. It's about interpretations of truth," Cumming said. "It's

about a writer who has to write a play about Liberace and doesn't want to."

The play revisits Liberace's historic and sensational 1956 libel suit against London's *Daily Mirror*, which, in a scathing article, insinuated that the performer was gay. In the landmark case, Liberace won — without admitting he was gay — leaving many to believe, accurately, that he lied under oath.

"This writer in the play is curious about that and sees him as a sort of traitor, a gay traitor," Cumming said.

After a long meeting with Cumming last year, Liberace Foundation Chairman Jonathan Warren approved licensing Liberace for use in "I'll Be Seeing You." The Liberace Foundation retains all rights to the image, story, name and intellectual property of Liberace. Warren is also serving as the historic accuracy consultant on the play.

"Liberace was able to prove in court that the article's insinuation was actually an accusation, and that the terminology used meant 'gay.' It wasn't just an

*Right: Alan Cumming and Jonathan Warren during a fireside chat at Thriller Villa in Las Vegas (Photo courtesy of Jonathan Warren)*

insinuation, especially when he called him 'fruit-flavored,'" Warren said.

Liberace succeeded in court where author and poet Oscar Wilde and British aristocrat Lord Montagu before him lost in similar legal cases in 1895 and 1954, respectively.

Warren said it can be argued that the accused all lied under oath in all three cases, but they had no choice in order to retain their livelihood. The now obviously overreaching laws against gays forced the hand of any accused. This is perhaps what the current generation misses, and what Cumming's play examines.

"The reason I'm adamant about Liberace getting the credit he deserves is that out of those three cases, he's the one who was a modern entertainer, and in the modern entertainment business, you have morals clauses in contracts," Warren said. "In those days, there were no protections for LGBTQ people, so if you didn't defend even the insinuation that you were gay [by lying], then you were gay and you're going to lose not only upcoming deals, but also you're going to have to pay back money you did earn. You had no choice. The crux of it was if you don't defend it, you're done."

In a show of support for "I'll Be Seeing You," which runs Sept. 12–Oct. 11, the Liberace Foundation hosted Cumming for a tour of the Liberace Museum Collection, including a chance to try on a replica of Liberace's Piano Ring, and a fireside chat inside the famed Thriller Villa in Las Vegas.

The actor-turned-director spoke about choosing the play, living your truth, understanding Liberace's relevance today and hoping history does not repeat itself.

**Chic Compass: What is your main takeaway about Liberace?**



**Alan Cumming:** Everyone knows Liberace and has a certain idea of him, but I think there was a little internal homophobia about him in that he was so garish and doing all the things people are terrified of when they are scared to come out. He was kind of the person your mum is afraid you're going to become, yet he still managed to convince people that he was straight. He was a genius if you think about it.

I think that what's interesting in this play is that the character of the writer represents what I think is mostly a gay characteristic: being slightly ashamed and angry at the Liberace legacy and the fact that he was this great lie.

That's interesting because the writer is the one in the play who is not living his truth. Not Liberace.

**Chic Compass: So much of this play is about the concept of truth.**

**Alan Cumming:** What's fascinating to me is that truth is so dependent on the era you live in, the circumstances you are in and the context of that truth as well. Out of context, it seems terrible that he lied about his sexuality. In context, he had to do that. It was the only thing he could do. For me, the best line in the play is when Liberace says to the writer, "You think I'm a traitor; you think I'm a sort of disgrace to gay life, but I did exactly what Oscar Wilde did and I won." That is absolutely the truth. He did.

It's kind of a combination of glitz and humor, but at the core of it is the question: What is your truth? My truth, if I were living in the 1950s, would be very different from what it is today. All of



*Left: Liberace's 1971 Czar Nicholas costume, designed by Frank Acuna, is displayed in front of a 1972 painting of the entertainer wearing it and is said to have heavily influenced Michael Jackson*

*Bottom Left: Pianist and recent Smith Center headliner Olga Kern on Liberace's Dancing Waters Steinway piano*

ours, I'd imagine. I'm sure you know the way things are going in this country that many of our truths will have to change.

**Chic Compass: Why did you choose this play?**

**Alan Cumming:** What's exciting is that you realize why I said this is as much about the writer as it is about Liberace. Liberace reveals to the audience that the young writer is not, in fact, 32. He's actually an 86-year-old man whose life is about to end and who feels he never truly lived. [Playwright] Martin Sherman is an 86-year-old gay man, and it's the most personal of his plays.

**Chic Compass: Does this story offer healing to those who feel the same way as the writer?**

**Alan Cumming:** In a funny way, it's sort of healing because you see the very person being accusatory about something is actually guilty of the same thing. We all do it. We all hide our truth and hopefully find a life that allows us to live it as much as we can. That's what made Liberace successful. He was a happy gay man at a time when many gay men were unhappy, sadly. He made that for himself, so I really admire that for him. There's such a lot of self-hate in the gay world, especially in older people because they've grown up with it much more than the younger generations. So I support anything that can heal that and make more people more understanding of each other's actions.

The play shows him in a positive way about gayness and cruelty and contextualizes it, and then shines a torch on the people who say, "You're terrible." Ha!



**Chic Compass:** I think this play is very relevant right now. With so much conversation recently about shows like "Heated Rivalry" — a gay love story — and "Stranger Things" — where a character came out — are we on a positive wave of people embracing, understanding and empathizing in America?

**Alan Cumming:** Hell no! It's a terrible time. There is legislation against trans people; DEI is seen as a bad thing now. However, in times of great oppression, there is great satire. One of the things Hitler did was shut down cabaret clubs. The reaction to "Stranger Things" and people asking, 'Why did he have to

come out?' is the very reason why we have to have stories like that.

I feel big stories like cute boys shagging sometimes obfuscate the facts, which are that queer characters are disappearing from our screens and cinemas. The number of shows with storylines with queer casts being canceled is stupid. There has never been a time in America in recent history where less queer representation is taking place. Although there are some high-profile ones right now, don't let that fool you. It's a terrible time. People are afraid. Most of us are worried about what is going to happen to us, our friends, neighbors, what may have already happened to them.

Also afraid of speaking out because we know what can happen to our livelihoods, our immigration status, etc.

There are a lot of things to be afraid of, but I don't think anything gets better by people staying silent. Your silence will not protect you, so I exhort you all to enjoy those stories, keep talking about those stories, but make sure they are not in isolation and that we are looking at real-life situations and real-life abuses and prejudices that are taking place around us, because they are many right now.

**Chic Compass:** Many think you could play Liberace.

**Alan Cumming:** I do think the character that I am on "The Traitors" draws great inspiration from Liberace. The idea of the "dandy," the person drawing attention to themselves by their style and sartorial message and by excess — that's what Liberace did.

Of course, you have to keep topping yourself. In the first episode this season, I'm meant to look like I'm dressed as a coffin.

The idea that this show has become the No. 1 unscripted show in America is so queer. The sensibility of it, me at the center of it and what I'm wearing and what sort of nutty, campy things I'm going to be saying to people. Again, satire grows in times of oppression, so I love that. We're living in that time, yet we are all over this queer show.

**Chic Compass:** I'm curious. How would Liberace do on "The Traitors"?

**Alan Cumming:** He would be amazing because he understands smoke-screens. He would charm everybody, and he wouldn't be seen as a threat.



*Left: The 1973 Piano Keys Suit designed by Jim Lapidus will be displayed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City for the second half of 2026*



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# grace

## GRACE, PRACTICED DAILY

By Laura Henkel / Photography courtesy of South Shores Animal Hospital

Grace does not arrive cleanly. It does not announce itself or ask permission. It rarely looks like virtue when it first appears. More often, grace shows up hungry, frightened, inconvenient — trailing behind you on a walk, perched on borrowed wings or waiting quietly to see whether you will notice at all.

I did not set out to write about animals. I set out to understand grace — not as an abstract idea, but as a practice. Grace is a word we often reserve for belief systems or moral aspirations, for moments we imagine should feel elevated or resolved. But lived grace is rarely tidy. It is logistical. It is repetitive. It is choosing, again and again, to remain present when withdrawal would be easier.

Over the past two decades, animals have moved through every chapter of my adult life, often arriving without invitation and staying long enough to alter my understanding of care, responsibility and loss. They asked for attention when I was tired, for patience when I wanted efficiency and for courage when letting go felt unbearable.

Again and again, it was through animals — furry, feathery, overlooked and unwanted — that grace found me, tested me and reshaped my life.

It was only later, through my relationship with Dr. Karen Stasiak, a veterinarian at South Shores Animal Hospital, that I came to recognize what I had been



*Trouble (front) and Nick (back) both chose their human*

*Right: Dr. Karen Stasiak is at work, in tune with her patients and their companions*

practicing all along. Through her clinical work with aging, traumatized and neglected animals, she gave language to patterns I had lived for decades but never formally named.

Animals, she explained, do not communicate distress through drama. They speak first through subtle shifts — the eyes, the posture, the willingness or reluctance to engage. "People often miss the early signals," she told me. "But animals are always telling us how they are doing. We just have to slow down enough to listen."

I had learned to listen long before I knew why.

Grace, I came to understand, is not sentiment.

It is practice.

### **Portia: Freedom Without Confinement**

After my divorce, when I was living in Dallas and learning how to inhabit my own life again, I bought a budgie and a cage for \$20. It seemed like a reasonable decision — small, manageable, contained. Something that would not ask too much of me.

But the moment I brought her home, the cage felt wrong. Not cruel exactly, but insufficient. Too small for a creature so alert to the world.

So I made a decision. The house would become her cage.

I created landing points throughout the space and learned to live differently — mindful of doors, windows, timing. Freedom, I learned quickly, is not the absence of structure. It is responsibility practiced with attention.

Her name was Portia. She was sweet, observant and opinionated. When I began dating again and grew serious with one man, Portia made her



assessment immediately. She dive-bombed him relentlessly, a tiny yellow avian missile asserting her authority. It was impossible not to laugh.

Eventually, something shifted. Trust, once earned, was wholehearted. She perched on his shoulder, gave kisses and became part of our shared rituals. Every morning, she waited patiently outside the shower. The moment we stepped out, she flew to our shoulders, ready for her own splash of water. She rode our toothbrushes like a bull at a rodeo as we brushed our teeth. She was the belle of our dinner parties — curious, impeccably behaved, beginning to speak.

What surprised me most was how much personality emerged once she was allowed to fully participate. She expressed affection, anger, jealousy, curiosity, playfulness — preference. She did not simply exist in the house; she engaged with it and with us. That kind of complexity does not emerge from confinement. It develops when a being is allowed to participate fully in its environment. Had she remained caged — fed, watered and observed — she might have survived. Instead, she lived.

And then one day, a bulge on her tiny stomach. A tumor.

That \$20 bird ultimately cost far more than money as we sought help from an avian specialist. We did not hesitate. Love does not tally costs once commitment has been made.

When it became clear we had reached the end, we were grief-stricken. We buried her in the garden beside a newly planted honeysuckle. Over time, hummingbirds and bees arrived in abundance. To this day, whenever I see either, I think of Portia.

Because of Portia, I came to believe that every animal has the right — the freedom — to flourish.

Grace, I learned, does not disappear when life ends.

It lingers.

### **Chocolate Chip: Loyalty Without Negotiation**

After Dallas came San Francisco — and with it, Chocolate Chip.

She was a rescued bait dog from Oakland, a German shepherd-corgi mix improbably assembled and utterly resilient. She had the body of a shepherd, the legs of a corgi and a face that seemed to hold two expressions

*Right: Dawna and Hallie are two of the friendliest staff at South Shores Animal Hospital, and the entire team is fantastic*

at once. When she ran, she looked almost aerodynamic. When she was happy, one ear stood straight up while the other flopped downward, joy disrupting symmetry. She smiled, too.

Chip did not like people. I learned to respect that. I kept her close. We kept our distance. But my closest friends — those who moved slowly and listened — earned her trust. And once she loved you, she loved you completely.

By the time she was a year and a half old, it became clear that something was wrong physically with her configuration. What followed was a double TPLO surgery at a leading veterinary teaching hospital. She emerged bionic — stronger, steadier, unmistakably herself again.

During her recovery, care, almost without noticing, became a ritual. Chip loved curries, barbecue — whatever came from the kitchen. Food, I learned, was not just nourishment. It was conversation.

We eventually found our way to Sausalito. I bought a sailboat to live on and put my house in storage. The boat was ready to set sail within 15 minutes. Chip adored boat life. She sunbathed on deck, leapt into the bay for swims and took to the rhythms of tide and wind as if she had always belonged there. Noise could still startle her — likely remnants of her early life — but trauma did not define her. She flourished anyway.

I never once locked the boat.

There is a particular kind of safety that comes from openness — from leaving the hatch open at night, from trusting the water and the wind, from moving through the world without barricades. Chip understood this instinctively. She knew I was her protector and she was mine. We watched over one another. On the boat, in the Marin Headlands, on long hikes along the cliffs and



beaches, we moved as a unit — alert, attuned, unafraid. We both felt safe.

I had Chip for 15 years. Fifteen years is long enough to watch yourself change. Long enough to move cities, lose relationships, rebuild routines and discover which parts of yourself persist. Chip witnessed all of it — steadily, without condition.

Toward the end, she looked at me with unmistakable clarity. Her eyes lost their sparkle. She told me she was ready.

Letting her go was hard — truly hard — but I listened. I did not prolong anything to soothe my own grief. I made her last day gentle, familiar, easy.

Love, I learned, is not holding on.

### **Zeus: Dignity Without Containment**

Zeus had not always looked the way he did at the end.

In his youth, he suffered from mange and lost much of the hair on his back. It never fully returned. He lived alert and itinerant, always moving — outwitting the

dog catcher, navigating the Sausalito waterfront with practiced intelligence. Left to his own devices, he survived through agility and endurance.

He was Tramp incarnate. Wise. Unowned. Choosing.

Zeus was a blue heeler-labrador mix, a Labraheeler. His alertness and endurance were shaped as much by instinct as by years spent surviving the docks. When Chip and I lived on a boat in Sausalito, Zeus entered our lives without announcement. He and Chip became companions — quiet, watchful, deeply aligned. He came and went as he pleased, as if the boat were simply another piece of the waterfront. At night, he chose to sleep with us, tucked under warm covers.

When it came time to leave Sausalito for Las Vegas, I hesitated. Zeus belonged to fog and pilings and salt air. But the local veterinarian urged me to bring him.

He understood something I did not yet know.

In Las Vegas, Zeus did something extraordinary. He rested.

For the first time, he relaxed. He barked. He discovered bones, hid them, re-claimed them. He took midnight swims. And slowly — astonishingly — his hair grew back fully.

The body, it turns out, remembers safety.

Zeus later developed acute kidney failure. The doctors did not know how he was still standing. I brought him in because something was off — subtle, but unmistakable. Animals do not dramatize decline. They communicate it.

I planned his last day.

There was a walk. A steak. A swim. Lounging. The veterinarian came to the house.

I often wish we treated people this well when their time comes — offering dignity instead of prolonged misery, presence instead of avoidance. Zeus was not made to linger.

After he died, I brought his ashes back to Sausalito. The waterfront people — those who had known him from puppyhood onward — gathered. One by one, they scattered his ashes into the bay, telling stories.

Zeus, it turned out, had belonged to many of us.

Grace, Zeus taught me, is not about saving a life at all costs. It is about honoring a life completely.

### **Trouble: Safety Repeated Until the Body Believes**

Trouble came into my life with Chip when he was about a year old in downtown Las Vegas — malnourished, scruffy, so underfed that a friend once joked he looked like a dog in a rat costume. He was a schnauzer-Jack Russell mix, all sharp edges and watchfulness.

I named him Trouble after he ate every fitted sheet I owned. Not shoes. Not furniture. Just sheets.

From puppyhood until the day he



*Trouble lived up to his name and was the Sean Connery of mutts*

died, Trouble would occasionally cower when I reached to pat his head. Someone had done a number on him. The history lived in his body.

With Trouble, you either got bit or you got kisses. If you got kisses, you knew you were special. If you got bit, you were special too — you usually tried to win him over, learning eventually that respect mattered more than persistence.

And yet, he knew he was safe.

As he aged, something else happened. With safety came softness. With trust came beauty. He began to prance when he walked. When he wanted something, he struck a perfect meerkat pose — upright, paws tucked, big brown eyes impossibly earnest. Silver wisps crept into his coat, giving him a kind of quiet distinction. He became,

improbably, handsome — the Sean Connery of mutts.

Trauma does not disappear through reassurance alone. It softens through repetition — through day after day of nothing bad happening.

Grace, Trouble taught me, is not the absence of fear.

It is safety repeated until the body believes it.

### **Care as Continuity**

Dexter came into my life when my dear friend Alexandra was dying of cancer. She worried about him. I promised to love him as mine.

That promise gave her peace.

Dexter was the happiest dog I have

ever known — a King Charles cavalier mix whose joy was immediate and contagious. He had an uncanny ability to read people: good or bad. I trusted his instincts. If he would not go near you and gave you side-eye, I knew.

Nick followed Trouble and Dexter home during COVID. Each time his owner retrieved him, he would escape and show up at my door. Finally, he said, "He is your dog."

Nick never tried to escape again. He chose his human.

Later came Beanie Montoya, my first foster-fail, a beagle-chihuahua mix who had spent his life caged in a backyard or locked in a bathroom. He was terrified of the world.

Trouble and Nick taught Beanie that it was safe to play, safe to explore. He gave Trouble so much joy in his final months. He brought the puppy out in both of them. In turn, Beanie pulled Nick back from grief after Trouble died.

Care, I learned, is never a one-way offering. It moves through a home like weather — passed from one being to another, reshaping everyone it touches.

## **Naming What Was Already True**

When Dr. Stasiak became the veterinarian to four of my fur babies — three seniors and a puppy — we grew close as Trouble's health required weekly treatments over the past year. She and her staff became his guardians, ensuring that his quality of life remained exceptional despite his ailments.

Through her clinical work and our conversations, she helped me understand why animals who have known neglect often thrive once they experience consistent safety. Stability is not merely emotional comfort; it is physiological intervention. Bodies settle when environments become predictable.

She explained that trauma lives in the body — but that it does not prevent flourishing. Vigilance may remain.

Sensitivities may persist. But joy, play, beauty and connection can still emerge when fear is no longer reinforced.

She helped me see care not as rescue, but as daily practice: routine, play, attention, reliability. She affirmed what experience had already shown me — that animals possess distinct, enduring personalities. History may shape them, but it does not erase individuality. They are not blank slates. They are themselves.

What veterinary medicine refers to as the human-animal bond is not sentimental. It is physiological, emotional and reciprocal.

Healthcare, she reminds us, is not merely clinical intervention. It is moral care.

Grace, she helped me understand, is not mercy. It is responsibility practiced with clarity and compassion.

## **Practice, Widened**

Over time, that practice widened. It was not limited to the animals who shared my home. It looked like walking dogs at shelters so they could feel the world beyond concrete for an hour. Sitting on the floor and reading aloud to animals who had learned to associate human voices with abandonment. Showing up for friends navigating illness or loss, holding their companions when they could not.

Care, I learned, does not require ownership. It requires presence. Animals meet us wherever we are willing to be still, attentive and kind — and in doing so, they offer something rare: uncomplicated joy, mutual regulation and the quiet assurance that connection does not have to be earned to be real.

Grace, it turns out, is available to anyone willing to pay attention.

## **Grace**

How we care for animals — especially when they are no longer convenient, healthy or easy — reveals how we

understand grace. Whether we mistake it for comfort or recognize it as responsibility.

I have learned that this practice is not mine alone. It is shared by veterinarians who listen beyond charts, by shelter workers who show up day after day, by fosters, volunteers and quiet caregivers who choose presence over avoidance. It is practiced by people who understand that care is not heroic — it is cumulative.

Grace is found in the daily decisions that rarely look remarkable from the outside: slowing down, paying attention, honoring limits and choosing kindness when no one is watching. It lives in the willingness to listen when the answer is difficult, to let go when holding on would be easier and to place another being's well-being ahead of our own need for certainty.

Along the way, animals offer something in return — not as reward, but as relationship. They bring us back into rhythm with the living world. They teach us how to notice small shifts, how to trust the body's wisdom and how to remain open to beauty even in seasons of loss.

Grace, I have come to understand, is not an emotion we feel in moments of affection.

It is a way of moving through the world — one that lifts rather than dominates, listens rather than insists and recognizes that all living beings are worthy of care.

When practiced daily, grace does not simply change how we love animals.

It changes how we show up for one another.

*In Memory of  
Pam Fischer and  
Sarah St. Claire*

# charity

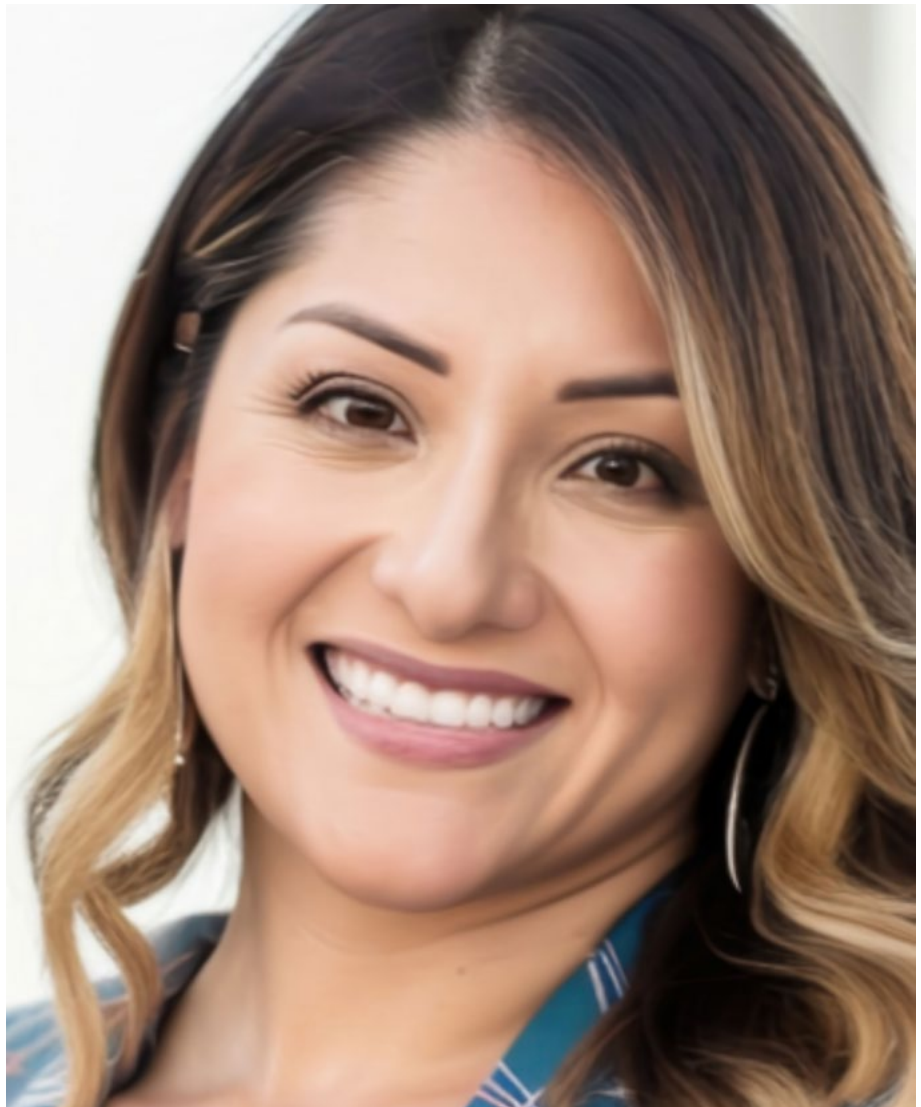
## LEADERS IN TRAINING DEVELOPS NEW LEADERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

By Debbie Hall / Photography courtesy of Leaders in Training

Leaders in Training, known as LIT, is a community-based non-profit rooted in East Las Vegas and dedicated to developing youth leadership while strengthening local communities through education and empowerment. Founded in 2012 in response to the needs expressed by students and families, the Las Vegas-based college access and leadership development organization serves first-generation students across Southern Nevada.

"We track our success through alumni achievements, community feedback and program evaluations to demonstrate tangible impact," said Martha A. Castillo, Ed.D., executive director of LIT. "Our founder, Erica Mosca, began LIT after years of teaching and working alongside first-generation students in northeast Las Vegas. These students were capable, motivated and ambitious, yet navigating systems not designed with them in mind. Her guiding question was simple but powerful: 'What if we could intentionally grow the next generation of leaders from within the community itself?'"

Being physically and culturally embedded in East Las Vegas shapes every aspect of LIT's work. Its programming reflects students' lived realities, fostering trust and confidence while ensuring the



*Above: Martha A. Castillo, Ed.D., executive director of Leaders in Training*



*Above: Leaders in Training attend a retreat and orientation*

*Right: A participant received her college acceptance through Leaders in Training*

community's voice guides the organization's responsiveness and accountability.

"We support students across multiple cohorts simultaneously, from freshman through senior year, and that embeddedness shows up in real ways," Castillo said. "Families refer siblings and cousins. Alumni return as volunteers. Partnerships grow organically because they are rooted in long-standing relationships, not one-time transactions. LIT isn't a program students pass through — it's a community they remain connected to over time."

Operating from East Las Vegas reinforces one of LIT's core beliefs: leadership should rise from the communities it serves. LIT isn't working on the margins but is part of the area's educational fabric.

"Across more than 216 alumni, we have seen that when students are supported to name their strengths, develop a leadership identity and gain access to opportunity, their trajectory changes," Castillo said. "Leadership becomes something they recognize in themselves,



not something reserved for others. Our role isn't to fix students but to cultivate leaders who already exist."

Students begin to see themselves as leaders as early as ninth grade through LIT's "Story of Self" curriculum. Early in the program, students reflect on their lived experiences, the challenges they have navigated and the people and moments that shaped them. For many first-generation students, this is the first

time they are invited to see their story not as a liability, but as a source of strength.

That foundation is activated in 11th grade through the Social Change Project, where students take on defined leadership roles such as project manager, facilitator or community outreach coordinator. Working in teams, they address issues impacting their communities through research, planning, collaboration and public presentation, often



*Above: Leaders in Training students visit the Nevada State Legislature*

engaging directly with nonprofit and community partners.

Together, these experiences shift leadership from an abstract idea into a lived practice, and by junior year, students are operating within leadership spaces. "Alumni consistently tell us this experience is transformational," Castillo said. "Naming their story builds confidence, voice and self-awareness, leadership skills that carry forward throughout high school and beyond. Students begin to understand leadership starts with knowing who you are and where you come from."

For many first-generation students, college enrollment is only the first hurdle. Once enrolled, students often face unfamiliar systems without a roadmap, balancing academic expectations, financial aid renewal, time management and self-advocacy alongside family responsibilities and financial pressure.

In response, LIT has revamped its Beyond High School program to meet students where they are, both in person and virtually. Workshops emphasize persistence beyond enrollment, focusing

on financial management, campus resources, professional communication and planning for life after college.

LIT has also expanded partnerships with local community organizations and professionals to provide expertise in workforce development, career pathways and business development. These partnerships allow alums to explore leadership outside of the classroom and create opportunities for broader community engagement through workshops, volunteer opportunities and collaborative events.

At its core, Beyond High School is about continuity. LIT remains connected after graduation, supporting students as they transition into adulthood with the confidence, skills and networks needed to move forward with purpose.

LIT describes its approach as a "whole family" model. From the beginning, the organization has included families through workshops, communication and ongoing support, recognizing that they're often the first source of motivation and resilience.

"This year, we are being more intentional with the launch of our First-Gen Families Academy," Castillo said. "The academy is designed to support families alongside students by helping them understand the systems their children are navigating while affirming the strengths they already bring. Drawing from Dr. Tara J. Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth framework, the program centers on the idea that families contribute powerful forms of capital — including work ethic, perseverance, storytelling and collective responsibility — that directly support student success."

She added, "For me, this work is personal. My family may not have known how to fill out a FAFSA or navigate college bureaucracy, but they instilled resilience, work ethics and a belief in education. The First-Gen Families Academy exists to make that often unseen support visible, valued and transferable so families are recognized not as barriers to success but as partners in leadership development."

Castillo, the daughter of Mexican immigrant parents, is a first-generation college graduate. She began her career mentoring justice-involved youth and serving as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for children in foster care before working as a special education teacher in the Bronx and later as a college readiness counselor. She holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from the University of La Verne, a master's degree in education from The City College of New York and an Ed.D. in educational leadership from the University of Arizona.

"One of the reasons I was drawn to Leaders in Training is that we challenge the assumption that GPA determines leadership potential," Castillo said. "Too often, college access programs unintentionally send the message that students who struggle academically are less capable of leading. In reality, some of the most effective leaders are those who learned to navigate adversity early on. Research and storytelling, including insights from 'David and Goliath' by Malcolm Gladwell, show that adversity

*Right: Leaders in Training participants visit Rice University*

can cultivate resilience, persistence and creativity."

This belief is deeply personal for her. She struggled academically throughout high school and much of community college while navigating an undiagnosed learning disability. It wasn't until Castillo learned she had dyscalculia that her experience in education shifted, giving her the confidence to persist. Had GPA been the sole measure of her potential, her life choices would have been very different.

"At LIT, we remove GPA as a gatekeeper because leadership shows up in many forms," she said. "When students are met with belief rather than barriers, they rise, and that's how we build a more inclusive and authentic leadership pipeline for our community."

While academic outcomes matter, LIT defines success more broadly, tracking persistence, degree completion, leadership development and self-advocacy. Recent surveys show 84% of alumni hold leadership roles in schools, workplaces or communities. Another 72% engage in mentorship or volunteering, and 58% participate in advocacy or organizing efforts.

"I often say I wish LIT had existed when I was growing up — not because it would have removed every obstacle, but because it would have changed how alone the journey felt. My parents did everything they could with the information they had, but they didn't have access to college knowledge, financial guidance or the language of higher education. Having LIT would have meant my family wasn't navigating those systems in isolation."

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For more information, visit [litlv.org](http://litlv.org) and follow LIT on Facebook (@Vleadersintraining), Instagram (@lit\_lv) and X, formerly Twitter (@LIT\_LV).



In 2008, founder Erica Mosca joined Teach For America as a fifth-grade teacher at Daniel Goldfarb Elementary School in East Las Vegas. She themed her classroom "Leaders in Training" and inducted every student as an official member, reinforcing the message that education leads to college and community leadership.

In 2011, Mosca earned a master's degree in education policy and management from Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she developed the nonprofit proposal that became Leaders in Training.

A first-generation college student herself, Mosca returned to Las Vegas to make equitable opportunity a reality. Founded in 2012 with her own savings and 20 students, many of them former classmates, LIT was built on the belief that potential is measured by commitment, growth and service.

The program is free and open to first-generation students, offering early support from high school through a nurturing ecosystem that fosters academic success and leadership development.

# IT SEEMS ODD AND I LIKE IT

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By Brijden Crewe

"Where the hell are we?"

Standing with a friend somewhere inside *Odyssey Noir* on a Saturday night, I realized that although I had been to this place numerous times in preparation for its 2026 reopening, led by their new head of nightlife and events at AREA15, Steven Guttman, looking around, it seemed that I was lost. It was a lot easier to find my way around with the house lights on during the daytime hours, when I was graciously given a couple of tours leading up to tonight's special event. *Odyssey Noir* is a sensual maze and seductive living room with a pulse, complete with hidden corridors, a lounge, decadent bedrooms and most importantly, a difficult-to-explain energy. *Odyssey Noir* feels like it's living and breathing. You're inside the space, but it feels like it's standing next to you, having a conversation with you in the form of its own personal style. Every chair is placed in a spot deemed necessary for the area. Every painting on the wall is perfect and purposeful. The space is incredible... and I'm lost.

I pull out my phone from my jacket after receiving a call from another friend I invited to check out the spot.

"Hey, Bridge. I'm here inside *Odyssey*. Where are you?" my guest asks me over the phone.



*Above: Holland Lohse sits before a backdrop of framed eye photographs inside *Odyssey Noir* at AREA15 (Sean Jones)*



*Above: Holland Lohse and Sienna Martinez dance inside a lounge within *Odyssey Noir* at AREA15 (Sean Jones)*

*Right: A bedroom vignette inside *Odyssey Noir* (Sean Jones)*

"I don't know. This place is a maze!" I answer back.

Now begins the journey to find my friend.

Speaking with Guttman about his plans for *Odyssey Noir* and AREA15 overall, I was met with the kind of manic energy you can only get from a native New Yorker.

"I see AREA15 as the Brooklyn of Las Vegas," Guttman says.

"Meaning, I want to see AREA15 as a true cultural epicenter of Las Vegas, where music, art, fashion and creative energy collide in an authentic way."

Recognizing that Las Vegas has been seeking a scene that reflects its evolving individual culture and distinctive local presence, Guttman's vision may not



be as far-fetched as one might think. At least not one who's familiar with what's been happening within the city.

From music to fashion, Las Vegas has been building a community filled with an artistic movement that grows by the minute, and AREA15 is the perfect place for that growth to reach its blossoming potential. From the beautiful murals painted

by local artists, available in their newly opened Zone 2 and parking garage, to their sculptures and vibrant glow-in-the-dark ambiance located inside their original building venue, AREA15 represents the future of what Las Vegas, as a local creative space, will look like.

"But it starts here with *Odyssey*," Guttman says.



*Above: The dancefloor at Oddyssey Noir with a canopy of paper lanterns (Sean Jones)*



*Left: Mirrored walls surround this private sitting area within Oddyssey Noir (Sean Jones)*

*Bottom Left: Evening guest inside a private bedroom (Daniel Auyon-Carillo)*



*Bottom Right: The dancefloor filled with passionate dancing to the set of DJ Steven Guttman (Sean Jones)*

*Right: Photo of Steven Guttman by Zack Paris*

*Bottom Right: Photo of a freestyle dancer breaking away from the crowd at Odyssey Noir by Daniel Auyon-Carillo*

Having only arrived a few months ago from New York, Guttman has already begun making Odyssey Noir one of the most unique nightlife spots in Las Vegas by creating a space where creatives come to play. Speaking on tonight's special guest DJ, Hector Romero, Guttman didn't hold back with his praise for a true master of the craft.

"The intention behind the venue is to present uncompromising excellence, so that a guest can walk in and immediately hear undeniable world-class music delivered by someone who has dedicated a lifetime to their art. The music becomes the soundtrack for the dancers, performers, models, artists and creatives who honor us with their presence organically, which sets a tone and energy that simply doesn't exist anywhere else in Las Vegas."

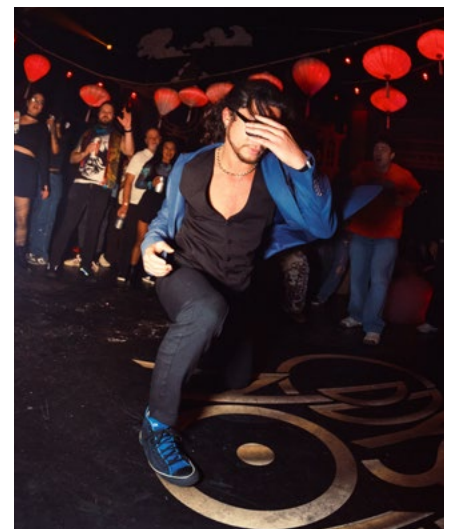
I understood exactly what Guttman was talking about when I ran into a few Cirque du Soleil dancers who I'm friends with and who perform at multiple shows on The Strip, along with a musician who sings background vocals for a very popular multiplatinum artist who has a residency here in town. All came to Odyssey for the vibe and were passionately dancing near the DJ booth, rocking to a DJ set by Guttman himself, who was warming up the crowd before Romero with funk B-sides from the 60s and 70s that, if you've ever heard them before, you probably only heard once in your lifetime.

And that's what makes Odyssey Noir feel special. It feels like its own space without the pretentiousness of being "underground" and thumbing its nose up at the typical club scene you'd find on The Strip. It doesn't have time for that. Nor does it care. Many of the rooms can feel Victorian in some areas, Transylvanian in other areas. There are Chinese streetlights that frame the top of the town square locations of the venue,



and they have mannequins dressed up like Marie Antoinette inside a few of the bedrooms. But it all makes sense somehow. It all feels necessary and sincere, which is what makes Odyssey Noir work. No ego. Nothing crazy. It's just being itself. Odyssey Noir is the answer to a question that was never asked but maybe should have been asked. Where has this place been all our lives?

Oh, and I found my friend eventually. I just told her to ask someone working there to direct her to the center dance floor near the DJ booth, where I was dancing with my Cirque friends to Guttman's set.



# HOW FILMMAKER JAMES CAMERON CONTINUES TO CREATE MAGIC WITH 'AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH'

By Janet Susan R. Nepales





Who would have imagined that a former truck driver and high school janitor would become one of Hollywood's most successful blockbuster directors and award-winning filmmakers?

James Cameron, who taught himself about special effects by reading everything related to film technology at the University of Southern California library, quit his job as a truck driver after being inspired by watching "Star Wars" in 1977.

Now 71, the Canadian filmmaker, behind films such as "The Terminator" (1984), "Aliens" (1986), "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (1991), "Titanic" (1997), "Avatar" (2009), "Avatar: The Way of Water" (2022), and the third installment in the "Avatar" franchise, "Avatar: Fire and Ash," continues to pursue his passion for filmmaking and deep-sea exploration.

In this latest epic, Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) and Neytiri's (Zoe Saldana) family encounter a new aggressive Na'vi tribe, the Mangkwan clan — also known as the Ash People — led by the fiery Varang (Oona Chaplin).

In an exclusive interview in Beverly Hills, we spoke with the acclaimed auteur about the making of his latest film. Before I could ask my first question, Cameron surprised me by turning the tables and asking, "I am sure you have seen the other ones. So, what do you think of this film?"

"I liked it," I replied. "It has a lot of heart. It's very emotional for me this time."

"I'm glad you found it emotional," he said, quite happy with what I pointed out.

*Left: Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) in 20th Century Studios' AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH. Photo courtesy of 20th Century Studios. © 2025 20th Century Studios. All Rights Reserved.*

So, how does he keep the story fresh, exciting and unpredictable?

"We knew we were going into uncharted territory with our characters," Cameron said. "We knew we were going to play out the consequences of what happened in the last film, where they lost their eldest son. There are so many people around the world right now dealing with loss, fear and uncertainty. We felt it was really important to have these themes in the film and to deal with humanity."

"Obviously, our characters are blue. They're not human, but we see ourselves in them. That's why the 'Avatar' movies work everywhere. We try to deal with things people are actually facing in their lives — love, loss, relationships. The connection to community, right? The threat of war. All of these things."

"We see Jake and Neytiri and their children — Kiri and Lo'ak — going through all of this. My bet is that it connects

with the heart of the audience. We promise all the visuals and the beautiful world-building, but where we really connect is in the emotions. So, I'm glad you had an emotional reaction."

Born in Kapuskasing, Ontario, to an electrical engineer father and a nurse-artist mother, Cameron explained how emotionally charged scenes — especially those involving family and community — were among the most challenging.

"I think you can probably think of a couple of scenes that were pretty emotional for us while making the film," he said. "Even when I was cutting it in the editing room and watching these incredible performances, there were moments that still got me. That's how I know the film is working."

Having worked multiple times with Worthington, Saldaña, Jack Champion (Spider), Stephen Lang (Miles Quaritch) and Sigourney Weaver (Dr. Grace

Augustine), does Cameron now have a shorthand with them?

"We're a family now," he said proudly. "When the cast — Sam, Zoe, Jack, Stephen, Sigourney — saw the film, there were a lot of tears and hugs because we felt like we really created something together. It's not easy. It's hard for them. It has an easy flow because we're doing performance capture."

"I take the cinematography and lighting out of the process. It's just actor to actor, director to actor. It's very immediate, almost like a theater rehearsal. It's a very creative process, and we really enjoy it. If we get to make another one or two or whatever, we will."

Cameron also explained the breathtaking cinematography of the scenes,

*Below: Oona Chaplin as Varang in 20th Century Studios' AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH. Photo courtesy of 20th Century Studios. © 2025 20th Century Studios. All Rights Reserved.*





*Above: (L-R) Director James Cameron and Zoe Saldana on the set of 20th Century Studios' AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH. Photo by Mark Fellman. © 2024 20th Century Studios. All Rights Reserved.*

whether the characters were in the air or underwater.

"I always work closely with my cinematographer, Russell Carpenter, my director of photography," he said. "And no matter how we try to keep the cinematographer on, he can't stay through two or three years of post-production. So, then I have to carry those ideas and work with the 'lighters' — the people who light individual shots in the CG realm.

"But I try to work with Russell, and he and I go back to 'True Lies,' even before 'Titanic.' He won an Oscar for 'Titanic,' so I trust Russ when we talk about it to execute and to get the kind of lighting that I'm talking about. And then I keep those ideas alive myself through post-production while he's off making other films."

When asked if he was already working on "Avatar 4" and "Avatar 5," Cameron was candid.

"Maybe. I'll think about it," he said. "The

theatrical market is depressing right now. Unfortunately, people are choosing streaming over the theater-going experience. If people don't show up, we can't keep making films at this scale. And then we'll have to adjust, and I'll tell other stories. Hopefully, people understand that this movie completes a story — it's a two-part story between 'The Way of Water' and 'Fire and Ash.' If we go on, I already know what those stories are, but they're different."

We pointed out to Cameron that this latest installment feels more relevant to our times because it reflects the plight of people facing hate, mistrust and displacement, particularly refugees and immigrants.

"The Sullys are displaced by violence. Jake Sully leaves to keep his people, his forest people, safe. But it doesn't matter. The enemy is chasing him. They're looking for him. They're not going to mess with the Omatikaya if they don't need to, and they're looking for Neytiri. They're looking for his family. He has a very specific reason to leave. But

anyone who has been displaced from their home is going to find it emotionally traumatic.

"And that's why we see Neytiri early in the film say, 'I don't have my forest. I don't have people whom I grew up with.' She feels like a stranger in a strange land. She's not a water person. And the fun thing is that Zoe Saldana herself is not a water person. She's actually like a cat. Now, she has learned how to hold her breath and be underwater, and she looks very comfortable in the movie, but it's not her thing.

"We're dealing with this idea of where do I belong, where's my home? Once I've found the place where I want to belong, I have to earn that. I have to earn the respect and acceptance of those people. We also see that with Spider. Spider desperately wants to be Na'vi.

He appreciates them so much. He paints himself blue. He tries to be Na'vi.

"He tries to be part of the Sully family. Neytiri's not having it because she's gone to a very dark place. But Spider is accepted by the next generation, by the kids. We see that hatred sometimes stops with the next generation, or at least it has to be learned all over again.

"He feels like an outsider even in his own family at times. That sense of displacement, or not knowing where you belong, who you are, or having a sense of self-worth, is something you see a lot with young people today. I grew up in troubled times in the '60s,

*Below: Kiri (Sigourney Weaver) in 20th Century Studios' AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH. Photo courtesy of 20th Century Studios. © 2025 20th Century Studios. All Rights Reserved.*

and I remember my teenage years as being troubled. We're dealing with a lot of pressure on this family. They're displaced. Do they fit in? They're trying to earn their place with the Reef People.

"They're mixed-race kids. Everybody knows Jake is part human, and that tension exists in the marriage. You think after the first movie, oh, it's an amazing love story. These people are going to be in love for the rest of their lives. Then you have kids. Stress number one. Now you're at war, and you're a mixed-race family living in a new place, trying to fit in and be respected and seen by that culture.

"I throw a lot of obstacles in the path of the Sullys, and I think that puts the audience on their side. We want to see them succeed. We want to go on that journey. Now you start throwing real serious threats at them, like the Ash

People, like the humans who are coming to harvest the Tulkun that threatens the entire community. Once again, in that allegorical way, it's dealing with a lot of things that people are going through right now in a way that seems to be full of hate than I can remember in my lifetime."

### **Miley Cyrus on Working on the Song for "Avatar: Fire and Ash"**

In a separate interview at the Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills, pop superstar Miley Cyrus spoke about creating the song "Dream as One" for the film.

"I had to watch the film first, and it wasn't finished yet," said the 33-year-old singer-composer.



"What I loved about that was it made it feel more a part of the 'Avatar' family, as someone new coming in after they've been working on this for 15 years, which was genius on my part. I'm starting to do the whole thing that everyone else is doing, with not even two percent of the hard work that it takes to do this. But it made me feel much more like a part of the entire journey they go on as creators.

"But I could obviously see myself in the story, which is what I love about 'Avatar.' It's large-scale, but it still has an intimacy and emotion that makes you feel like you can identify with the story, even though we don't all live in Pandora. In some way, we all create our own kind of clans and that kind of chosen family, and resilience is something that resonated with me a lot for the song."

Cyrus explained to us which themes

from the movie – fire and ashes of human relationships, grief, loss and family dynamics – she would want the melody and lyrics to reflect on.

"Well, the melody, for me, I wanted something that surrendered to the scale of the film," she said. And even though it belts and it grows, and it gets big, it starts as a singular vocal, very minimal, which I thought was very anti-'Avatar.'"

She added, "I like to do anti-things. Whatever you're supposed to do, I want to do the other thing. I started it as small as I could, knowing that it could always grow. 'Avatar' is more than epic, and I really realized that at the premiere, more so than I did in my first couple of viewings. Because even though it's over the top and the sound design is incredible, and you're immersed immediately, I saw the smaller moments as something that really stood out to me in 'Fire and Ash.'"

"I wanted my song to have small, intimate, quiet family moments but be very glamorous as well. Because when I think of 'Avatar,' especially costume designer Deborah Scott's work with everything she does in the costume design, I love all the looks. That was one of my favorite parts. And I love that everyone has their own identity. Even though they're a clan, they're a group, they still individualize themselves. I was really inspired by the incredibly beautiful world that James created."

*Below: Director James Cameron and Oona Chaplin on the set of 20th Century Studios' AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH. Photo by Mark Fellman. © 2025 20th Century Studios. All Rights Reserved.*



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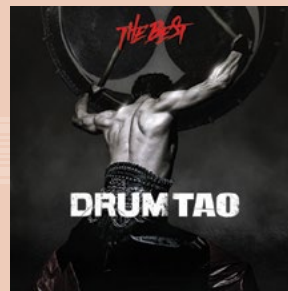
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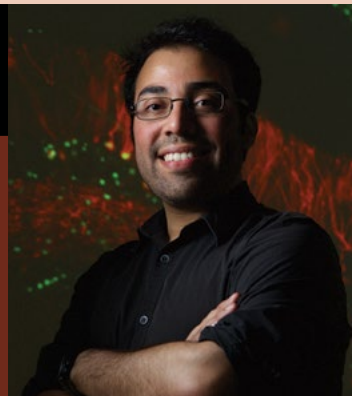


APRIL 10

 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC | LIVE

**STEVE RAMIREZ**  
*Untangling The Mind*

APRIL 9



# THE FUTURE FACE: HOW TECHNOLOGY IS REWRITING SKINCARE AND ANTI-AGING

By Erika Luren, RN, BSN, MA, MS, NP, founder of Rolling Wellness Telemedicine

Las Vegas has always been a city of reinvention. One night you're at a show watching a performer defy physics; the next morning you're walking into the Las Vegas Convention Center and watching technology defy what we thought skincare could do.

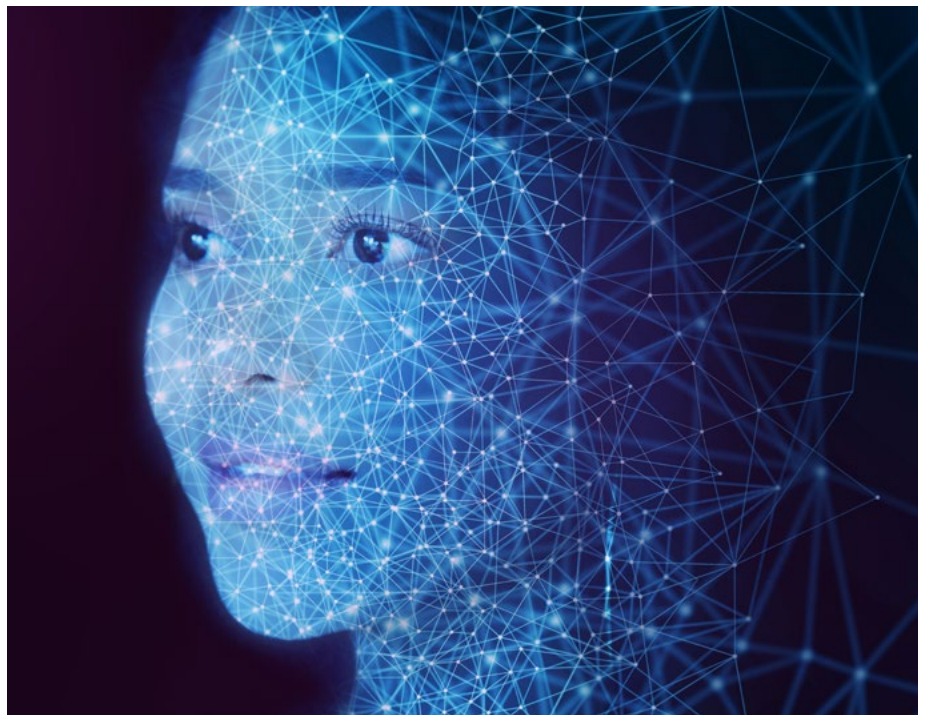
At CES, hosted yearly in Las Vegas, beauty tech wasn't just an afterthought. It was an emerging category resonating its belonging among hardcore tech gadgets and gurus. Advances showcased a measurable science behind beauty, with devices that can delve into the depths of the skin, predicting results based on a unique human biome and tools that blur the line between the spa, the dermatologist's office and your own bathroom counter.

This is the "Future Face," a new era where anti-aging becomes less about chasing trends and more about personalized data, targeted delivery and longevity science. CES 2026 made one thing clear: The next decade of skincare won't be defined by a single miracle cream. It will be defined by platforms, hardware, sensors, AI and ingredients designed to work together.

## CES 2026 Beauty Tech Innovations

### 1. Amorepacific Skinsight Wearable Sensor Patch

According to Engadget, "Researchers at MIT have been working with the South Korean beauty company Amorepacific for the past few years to develop a



wearable 'electronic skin' platform that can provide real-time insights about skin aging and make personalized skincare recommendations" (MacDonald, 2025). Skinsight was announced as a 2026 CES Innovation Award honoree.

What is it?

- A skin sensor patch that continuously tracks aging-related signals influenced by environment and lifestyle, such as UV exposure and hydration changes.
- The collected data feeds into AI for personalized skincare recommendations, shifting skincare from reactive to predictive and preventive.

Trend prediction:

Wearable skin health sensors open a new frontier in real-time skin tracking, which will influence skincare regimens profoundly. This tech will delineate a clear path in choosing products and brands aligned with your personal skin needs. As BeautyMatter noted in its CES coverage, real-time skin tracking represents "a turning point where skincare routines evolve dynamically, much like fitness or glucose monitoring."

### 2. Samsung AI Beauty Mirror (with Integrated Diagnostics)

One of the most typically crowded CES beauty exhibits showcased a revamped



product developed by Samsung from a 2025 prototype, in collaboration with Amorepacific. This crowd-pleaser was presented as a typical large vanity mirror on the wall but with a hidden megalth of capabilities likened to that of a smart TV. This mirror has the capability of analyzing skin type and then creating user-specific product recommendations, which is novel in its development and journey to be consumer-ready. According to SamMobile, "Amorepacific developed the algorithm using more than 20,000 clinically labeled skin diagnoses, enabling an accuracy factor of over 85%" (Matei, 2025).

What is it?

- An AI-equipped mirror that analyzes pores, redness, pigmentation and wrinkles through camera diagnostics.
- Connects analysis with skincare suggestions and device or product recommendations.

Trend prediction:

This is way beyond the dreaded magnifying mirrors many use to begrudgingly highlight dirty pores, wrinkles and dark spots we never knew we had. This is a level up, a mirror that bridges professional skin analysis and home routine customization to show what's really happening.

### 3. L'Oréal Light Straight + Multi-Styler

"Traditional hair straighteners operate at 400°F or higher, temperatures that damage keratin, reduce shine and weaken hair. L'Oréal's Light Straight + Multi-Styler uses patented infrared light technology to straighten hair while never exceeding 320°F ... near-infrared light to reshape hydrogen bonds inside hair fibers — the molecular structures that determine hair's shape. This changes hair's form without extreme heat, keeping the cuticle smoother and stronger" (Hill, MSN, 2026).

What is it?

- A hair and skin device using near-infrared light instead of extreme heat to style hair with less damage and faster results.
- Won 2026 CES Innovation Award.

Trend prediction:

Light-based devices for hair care signal a broader adoption of energy-based beauty tools, including for skin repair, coming into homes in 2027.

### 4. L'Oréal Flexible LED Face Mask

Guive Balooch, global vice president of tech and open innovation at L'Oréal Groupe, provides insight into the creation of this mask via an article in TechRadar by Ruth Hamilton. "We wanted to create something that was inspired by a sheet mask. Something that could be thin, pliable, flexible but could work as well as the masks that are at the highest level technically. This is the solution. We think that this will be a

game-changer in the LED mask market."

What is it?

- A prototype wearable mask delivering targeted red and near-infrared light therapy for fine lines, tone and firmness.
- Ultra-thin and flexible, making it wearable and more practical than rigid LED panels.
- Delivers direct facial light therapy in 10-minute timed intervals using two important wavelengths of light: red light (630 nm) and near-infrared light (830 nm).

Trend prediction:

LED and near-infrared aren't "new," but this CES moment signals maturation: better ergonomics, better sensors and broader consumer adoption. The medical evidence is also becoming more robust, though not uniform across devices and protocols. A controlled clinical trial published in "Photomedicine and Laser Surgery" reported improvements in wrinkles, roughness and intradermal collagen density after red and near-infrared light treatment (Wunsch and Matuschka, 2014).

Additionally, *Allure* and *Vogue Business* have noted in prior LED coverage that the technology's effectiveness depends heavily on wavelength accuracy, dosage and consistency — areas where CES-level innovation is raising the bar. LED therapy devices optimized for comfort and daily use will become a key spring beauty tech lineup, blending aesthetics with results.

## 5. Medicube Age-R Booster Pro

This new beauty tech is considered tried and true by Mary Honkus and Beth Gillette of *Cosmopolitan*, along with celebrities like Kendall Jenner and Hailey Bieber. It's a six-in-one skincare device inspired by K-beauty treatments, helping boost skincare product absorption by more than 700% in just five minutes.

What is it?

- A multifunction device combining microcurrent, EMS toning, LED light therapy, vibration and

electroporation to improve skin firmness and absorption.

- According to dermatologist Dendy Engelman in *Harper's Bazaar* (Intner, 2026), "It combines multiple functions, electroporation to improve ingredient penetration, microcurrent for contouring and firming, and EMS with red light to target fine lines and loss of elasticity, so you can address several skin concerns in one device."

Trend prediction:

Multifunction tools that combine multiple energies to deliver comprehensive skin improvement will be hot for spring as users look to simplify routines.

## 6. Kolmar Korea Scar Beauty Device

"The device's key technology is piezoelectric plating based on AI big data. After scanning a scar using a smartphone camera to analyze and define it among 12 types of skin deformations, the device automatically selects and sprays a remedy. The device then selects a color that most naturally matches the skin tone by using 180 swatches, then sprays makeup powder over the blemish. The treatment is completed in 10 minutes," according to *The Korea Times* (Ko Dong-hwan, 2026).

What is it?

- An AI-driven system that analyzes and classifies scars via smartphone imaging and delivers customized treatment.
- Won both the CES Best of Innovation and Digital Health awards.

Trend prediction:

AI-guided treatment devices that diagnose and treat specific concerns, such as scarring or uneven texture, will expand beyond dermatology offices into clinics and consumer tiers.

## 7. MaXpace On-Demand Personalized Cosmetics Device

According to Trend Hunter, "This beauty-tech innovation uses modular, swappable cartridge boards and precise

dispensing to instantly create skincare, foundation and lip products on a single platform." (McQuarrie, 2025)

What is it?

- A 2026 CES Innovation Award honoree that instantly formulates personalized skincare, foundation and lip products at the point of experience using real-time skin data.

Trend prediction:

As *Forbes* and *Glossy* have reported in recent years, personalization is one of the strongest predictors of brand loyalty in beauty. Bespoke formulations custom-mixed at retail or in spa settings are very likely to gain traction by spring.

## The Future Face, realistically

CES in Las Vegas didn't declare the end of skincare as we know it. It revealed what skincare is becoming: more personalized, more device-driven, more measurable and more intertwined with longevity science.

But the best future won't be the one with the most gadgets — it'll be the one with the best guardrails: evidence-based protocols, safe claims, privacy protections and human expertise guiding the technology.

Because even in a world of smart mirrors, wearable patches, LED masks and needle-free delivery systems, one thing stays timeless: The most powerful glow-up is still the one rooted in real health — sleep, stress regulation, nutrition, movement and smart, consistent care.

And if any city is ready to test-drive the Future Face first, it's the one where tomorrow always arrives early: Las Vegas.



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# CROWN BLOCK IN DALLAS HAS A LAS VEGAS CONNECTION AND MICHELIN ATTENTION

Article and Photography by Elaine & Scott Harris

Crown Block sits atop Reunion Tower, a gleaming jewel high above the Dallas metroplex, with a Las Vegas connection in Elizabeth Blau and her husband, chef Kim Canteenwalla, of Blau & Associates, whose reputation for excellence makes Dallas a natural addition to their collection of restaurant jewels.

Any time of year is an excellent time to visit, but the holiday season is especially special for sharing a meal with loved ones. Walking in, the far-reaching cityscape gleams through floor-to-ceiling windows. The grand circular room is inviting, with chrome accents, warm woods and comfortable seating.

John Pineda, Crown Block's executive chef, designs dishes that are precise and comforting. During our visit, we began with the bread course, which arrived early in the meal: a warm, aromatic loaf, lightly dusted with flour, sea-salted, and drizzled with olive oil. It melts on the tongue and evokes the first food memory of the evening with every bite, setting the tone for a menu rooted in seasonal ingredients such as apples, cranberries, persimmons, beets and wild mushrooms, alongside elevated comfort dishes like truffle gnocchi pasta and braised short ribs.

Standout dishes that were a must included the baked brie with apple cranberry compote, smoked pecans and focaccia toast; lobster Newberg gratin with Maine lobster, gruyere cheese and duchess potatoes; roasted beets



*8-ounce certified Black Angus filet mignon*



*Berkshire pork tomahawk*

and burrata with black mission figs, watercress, pepita crumble and Minus 8 vinaigrette; wagyu croquettes with A5 wagyu beef and Keen's hot mustard sauce; blackened Texas redfish with tomato creole, rock shrimp and wilted mustard greens; bigeye tuna sashimi;

a 16-ounce dry-aged Berkshire pork tomahawk; and an 8-ounce certified Black Angus filet mignon, medium rare. The meal also included sides, such as broccolini, mashed Yukon potatoes and roasted carrots.

The grand finale included the warm apple galette with butterscotch sauce and vanilla ice cream; caramel Basque cheesecake with salted caramel ganache, toffee cream and cinnamon ice cream; and the pumpkin spice crème brûlée donuts filled with pumpkin-spiced cream and drizzled with maple, as well as the Turtle Creek peanut butter bar with Valrhona dark chocolate mousse, creamy peanut butter, hazelnut crunch and caramel corn.

Crown Block's reputation has grown naturally with the brilliance of its quality, the steady, small extra touches highlighted by the kitchen team, and the attention of both the front and back of the house. Its two Michelin mentions, earned in consecutive years, reflect the restaurant's dedication to hospitality, creativity and culinary craft — and suggest a Michelin star may be on the horizon.

"Earning a Michelin recommendation for a second year reaffirms everything we work for at Crown Block: warm hospitality, creative spirit and an elevated approach to dining in the most iconic building in all of Dallas," Pineda said. "I'm really proud of our team," adding that the fall menu was a "perfect example of the level of craft, seasonality and excellence we aim to provide every day."

Having experienced Crown Block, we can only see Michelin stars shining in the future atop Reunion Tower in Dallas.



*Turtle Creek peanut butter bar*



*Wagyu croquettes*



*Broccolini and mashed Yukon potatoes*



*Bigeye tuna sashimi*



*Elaine Harris*



*Crown Block dining room*

# Smith

## FROM DRUMSTICKS TO DESTINY: THE INSPIRING MUSICAL ODYSSEY OF JOHN PARENTI

By Sheryl Aronson

John Parenti's story begins in New Jersey, where a childhood encounter with music set the course for his life. At 4 years old, he walked in on his older brother's band and something ignited within him. "I saw the drummer in particular, and I knew I was going to do music for the rest of my life," Parenti remembers. Encouraged by his family, he received his first snare drum and later a drum set. The young boy practiced diligently and immersed himself in learning music.

The family's move to Las Vegas in 1972 marked a new chapter, intensifying Parenti's dedication. His father's night-time visits to Circus Circus led to a mentorship with a professional drummer. "When I was 14, I would accompany my dad to Circus Circus almost every night — he enjoyed gambling. I was captivated by the drummer in the band that played during the trapeze acts. Night after night, I stood outside the cage, mesmerized, wishing I could be in there playing. Over time, I befriended the drummer, who was much older, and he allowed me to sit beside him as he played."

For hours, two or three nights a week, Parenti watched the drummer perform



*Producer John Parenti works in his Newport Coast, California, studio (Photo by Jomi Parenti)*



*Left: Guitarist Allen Hinds performs as a living room transforms into a live recording space (Photo by John Parenti)*

*Bottom Left: (L-R) Joni Parenti, gypsy jazz artists Jon Garner and Lorelei Isidro Garner and producer John Parenti (Photo by Bruce Richardson)*

intricate, rudimentary licks with precision. Eventually, he realized this was the person he wanted to learn from — not the teachers at the music stores. With his father's help, they approached the drummer about giving Parenti lessons.

At first, the drummer declined, saying he didn't give lessons because he was a professional. "But something 'changed hands' between him and my dad, because the next Saturday, he showed up at our house ready to give me a two-hour lesson," Parenti fondly says. "For about a year and a half, I received intensive, real-world instruction from him — forget the books, he was teaching me how to truly lead a band." After one particular lesson, the drummer told Parenti's father that the young musician was better than he was and that he couldn't teach Parenti anything more.

After outgrowing his teacher, Parenti joined amateur bands, playing jazz for inspiration and mastering rock and pop to break into the local music scene.

While a senior in high school, Parenti had a chance encounter that would shape his future. He walked into an empty church after hours and found Benny Hester, a Las Vegas singer-songwriter formerly signed to CBS Records, performing alone. Struck by the music, especially the songwriting, he sat down and listened, later telling him, "I've never heard music like this in my life." Their conversation revealed that Hester also owned a jingle business responsible for 90% of the jingles in Las Vegas and that he had seen Parenti play at a concert the previous night. Hester remarked, "Are you a drummer?" and when Parenti confirmed, Hester said, "Were you playing a concert last night? I was there." The odds of such a meeting were remarkable, and Hester's recognition of



Parenti's talent was a pivotal moment.

Their connection quickly led to a bold proposal. Parenti recalls, "I just looked at him and said, 'Let's start a band.'" Although Hester initially hesitated, explaining, "I don't really have the players — all of the players in Elvis's 'Taking Care of Business' band had played on my first record in Las Vegas, but they were obviously not able to tour with me." Parenti was undeterred. He replied, "Don't worry, I know the band. I've got all the guys I play with in high school — they're serious musicians, they're incredible players."

Hester agreed, and with a handshake, they formed a band, marking the beginning of Parenti's professional career. "That was the beginning of my pro career and also the steering of my career toward what we call CCM, which is Contemporary Christian Music."

Touring followed across the U.S., with performances at Main Street, U.S.A. at Disneyland Park, the Oakland Coliseum and even on a Navy aircraft carrier. After forming their band, Parenti and Hester decided to cold-call Sparrow Records, the most elite Christian record label at the time. The CEO, Billy Ray Hearn, a legendary figure in Christian music, invited them to California to present their music in person. "Benny and I drove down to California; we had a three-song demo. I had just graduated from high school, and Benny was about 10 years older than me at the time."

When they arrived, they were ushered into Hearn's sprawling office, adorned with gold records. Parenti describes the scene: "He was a very amiable Texan, an older man, and he listened to our demo in front of us. He tapped his foot, he smiled — it seemed like it was just going fantastic." However, the meeting took an unexpected turn. "When the record got done, he just said, 'Thanks for coming. You boys are dime a dozen.'" The sting of rejection was immediate. Parenti reflects, "Talk about rejection — that's another big lesson you learn — tenacity. And if you're going to fail, fail forward."



*Above: Driving into Chicago after one of the touring vehicles broke down*

Despite feeling dejected, they returned to Las Vegas, determined to practice harder, even though they weren't sure what would come next.

Three weeks later, in the middle of an afternoon rehearsal, the phone rang. It was Hearn from Sparrow Records. "He said, 'I've been thinking about you boys. You better get back down here right now.'" Parenti and Hester drove back to California the next day. This time, they met with Hearn and another label executive, Greg Nelson, a talented string arranger and composer. The four of them sat at lunch, and Hearn pulled out a napkin, asking, "How much do you think it costs to make a good record? We'll take care of all the sales, all the promotion, all the printing of the albums — just to go in the studio." Before Parenti and Hester could answer, Hearn offered, "How about \$50,000?" — a staggering sum, equivalent to several hundred thousand dollars today.

Parenti remembers, "We were flabbergasted. We had nothing but a demo, but he had a lot of faith in us."

With this leap of faith, they soon found themselves in Nashville, working under the guidance of renowned producer Brent Maher. "He was the engineer for 'Proud Mary' and 'Age of Aquarius' and went on later to discover The Judds and write their hits and produce their music."

The experience was transformative for Parenti: "Under his direction, I flourished. I still draw from his professionalism, his preparation and all the things he taught me during those three weeks in every session I do to this day. He was such a mentor." It was a major milestone in his career.

After touring, Parenti transitioned to radio, hosting the morning drive-time show at KILA in Las Vegas and a home-maker show. "As a 21-year-old kid, I knew nothing about the topic, but being a DJ was fun and we had big ratings. It was a blast."

After years of building his reputation in music production, Parenti faced a major decision about where to base his career. Despite knowing that Hollywood might offer more opportunities, he chose the quality of life in Orange County, California, believing, "I'll just create the best career that I can, living in a beach town, but I'm not doing Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood."

As a natural progression, Parenti's music evolved from that of a musician to a composer. His most notable and memorable work was a song he co-wrote with Hester for the burgeoning CCM pop market. Taking inspiration from a Bible study he had recently taught on the parable of the Prodigal Son, Parenti penned "When God Ran." It quickly

climbed to No. 1 on the airplay charts in 1985. Astonishingly, it held its No. 1 position for a record 13 consecutive weeks. It has since been re-recorded multiple times by various artists and again reached No. 1 in each of the last three decades. Word Records named it the No. 3 most important song of the 20th century. Adding to his successful songwriting run, in the same year, two other songs that Parenti co-wrote also achieved No. 1 status in other national CCM categories — the first time a composer has held three simultaneous national No. 1s.

In the early 1990s, his career took a new direction as he built his own recording studio and hung out his "record producer" shingle. He began by working with a wide range of musical genres. "I was producing music in the style of the Beastie Boys and Whitney Houston-type ballads; I was doing country — I even did rap songs for an NBC Movie of the Week. Those were my learning years — how to produce the different genres of music authentically." This versatility set the stage for an unexpected opportunity: a cold call from a large advertising agency in Orange County. They told Parenti they had a bunch of commercials to get done and their in-house guy wasn't available. "Can you come to our studio and do our

commercials for us?" Despite knowing little about commercials or the advertising world, he dove in, quickly adapting and learning on the job. "I was really in over my head, but I was having a really good time."

A chance meeting with Hal Brice, the agency owner, led to a transformative partnership. Inspired by the creative energy of the agency, Parenti pitched a bold idea to Brice. "I put my idea down, as they say, on one sheet of paper — 'I'd like to move my recording studio into your advertising agency and do all your commercials from now on and compose all your jingles ... I'll be embedded here with all my expensive high-end gear, so I'll make better sounding commercials than you have now. And you can show off my studio to your potential clients. I'll make my records, write your jingles and do your commercials.'"

Brice said, "We love music" and he accepted. For the next 20 years, Parenti's studio operated inside the agency's facilities. This arrangement became a conduit for him to produce more than 10,000 radio commercials and about 70 jingles for major brands like IHOP, the Los Angeles Times, the Los Angeles Clippers and Marie Callender's. "There were many fun sessions with lots of

celebrities, and really great times scoring music for commercials that lasted for that 20-year span."

As technology advanced, Parenti adapted by moving his studio home and embracing the work-home balance: "I decided to move my studio back home and let go of much of my oversized analog equipment and start doing almost all of my work in what we call 'in the box' — we record, we mix, we arrange, we master all of our records on a Mac. My control room is my former dining room."

He describes the benefits: "The beauty of working this way is everything is recallable — working on multiple records at once becomes so efficient and mixing deep into the night becomes easy, so I once again reinvented how my career worked and how I produced music."

Parenti now works both one-on-one with artists, overdubbing each instrument one at a time and in full band sessions with top Hollywood musicians. "Sometimes you just want a band, and you want all the musicians in the room at the same time. Magic happens because they start inspiring each other and spontaneous creativity occurs that could never be created in any other way. I've spent decades establishing close relationships with LA's elite session players and it's an honor to have the best of the best play on my tracks."

Summing up his career, Parenti emphasizes the importance of hard work and versatility: "Young musicians need to spend hours learning their craft... there's no shortcut to that... have a lot of musical versatility, learn a lot of different styles of music, learn theory, learn several instruments and it will pay you back tremendously."

He also stresses the value of initiative: "Be extremely proactive, make the call, start the project, send the email, because 20 years is going to go by in a flash... don't wait to be ready to start because you'll never be ready. And when a window of opportunity



*Above: A record release party with Nicolaas tenBroek, Roberto Vally, John Parenti, John Giannone and Patrick Woodland*

opens, even through a brief conversation... recognize it. Take a chance, bet on yourself."

Currently, Parenti is producing and recording a range of talented artists, including Sebastian Bird ("a folk artist reminiscent of the 60s folk artists with a fast vibrato"), Daniel Kristof ("a powerful blues rock singer"), Jon Garner ("a gypsy jazz guitarist who is one of the finest lyricists I know"), Sydney Cohen ("a great singer/writer in the vein of Sabrina Carpenter"), Sophia Rollando ("a fabulously big voice and a writer of hook after hook") and Wyatt Michael ("a jazz artist in the old standards style of jazz... when he sings, you're brought back to Sinatra, you're thinking Michael Bubl  and he is one of the most gifted vocalists I've ever heard"). Michael's album will be an homage to the past but will be very contemporary and have a lot of musical surprises. "With Wyatt now a Las Vegas resident," Parenti adds, "everyone in Las Vegas should get excited about this record that we'll be starting this spring."

Most recently, Parenti is forming a new record label, Lido Records. "Having a label will enable me to make more music more efficiently and give my artists better distribution, a more effective social media presence and overall give them a greater platform to succeed. Lido Records is going to punch above its weight and make a true impact in the music industry."

For more information, visit [parentimusic.com](http://parentimusic.com).



*Above: Bassist Sean Hurley records during a session for Sebastian Bird (Photo by Joni Parenti)*



*Above: John Parenti celebrates his 50th birthday with close friends: (L-R) Recording artist and TV producer Benny Hester, Pulitzer Prize-winning, best-selling author J. R. Moehringer, tennis star Andre Agassi and John Parenti*



*Above: John Parenti during a preproduction session with Sophia Rollando*



*Above: John Parenti with artist Sydney Cohen in his Newport Coast studio*



*Above: John Parenti with country and rock artist Daniel Kristof in his Irvine studio*



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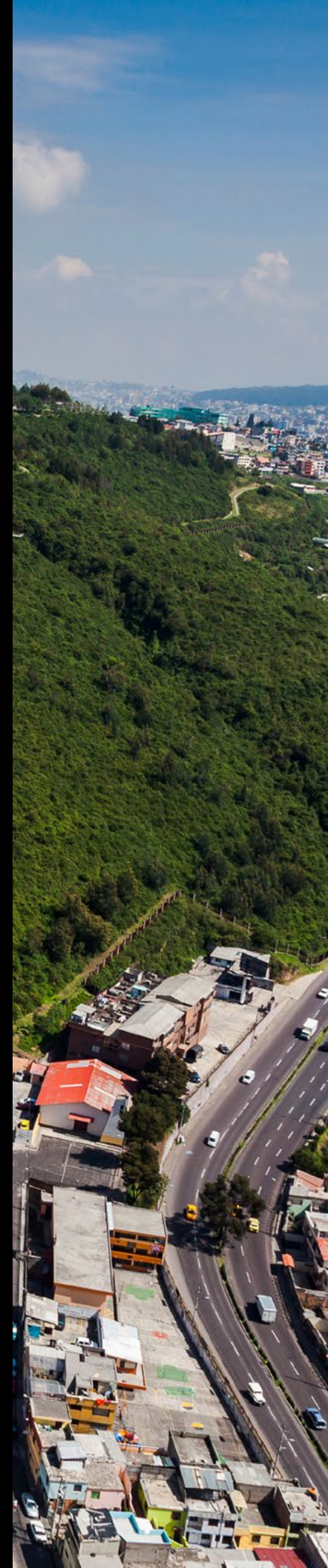
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# ART HEARTS FASHION ECUADOR: MIDDLE OF THE WORLD FASHION

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By Chanelle Hayes-Sessions

For the first time in Ecuador, Art Hearts Fashion, known for its iconic runway showcases in Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami and New York, brought its global vision to Quito in December 2025. The landmark Itchimbia Park set the stage for a celebration of design in the Middle of the World featuring Bad Pink, Carlos Pineda, David Tupaz, Giannina Azar, Idol Jose, Merlin Castell, Mister Triple X, Pia Bolte and Will Franco, alongside Ecuadorian talents including Kikinman, Lunaia, Nisha Amazónica, Patricio Maya, Pomarosa, Sinchiwarmi, Sofra, Taarach, Takiri/Joyería and Toska. Each of the designers offered everything from elegant couture and sparkling evening wear to edgy street style and collections inspired by Ecuador's rich cultural heritage. Alessa XO also brought the shows to life with a lively performance that added rhythm and movement to the runway.





DESIGNER: GIANNINA AZAR  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER

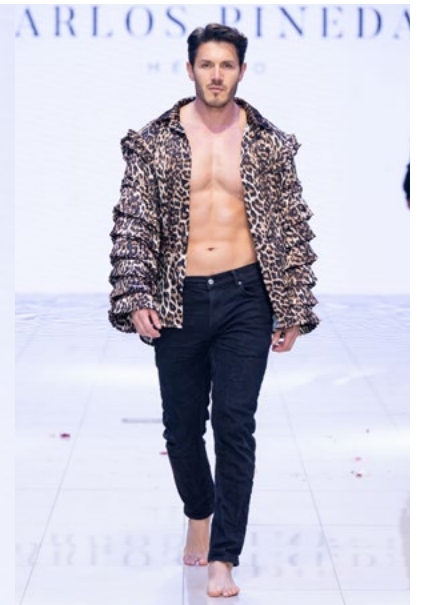




DESIGNER: BAD PINK  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: CARLOS PINEDA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER

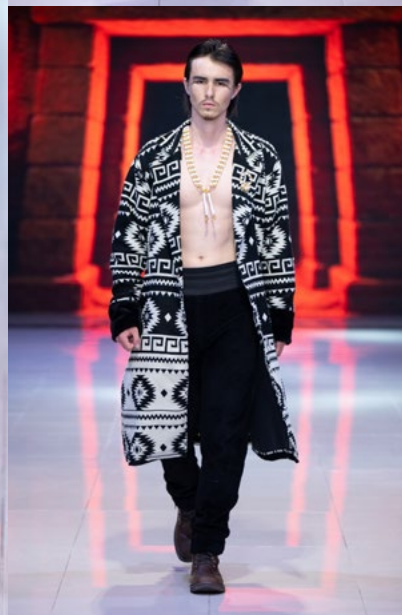




DESIGNER: DAVID TUPAZ  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: JOYERIA KIKINMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: MISTER TRIPLE X  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER





DESIGNER: PATRICIO MAYA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER

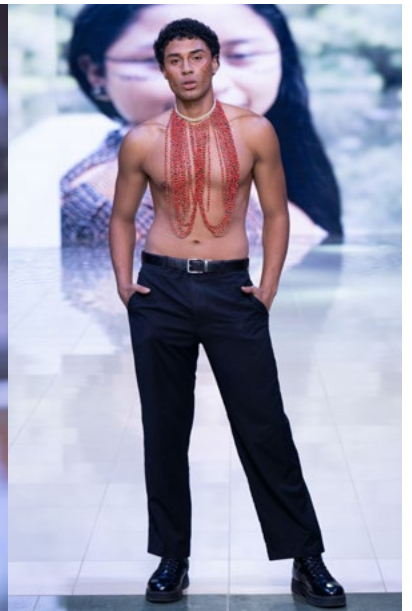




DESIGNER: PIA BOLTE  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: JOYERIA KIKINMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER





DESIGNER: WILL FRANCO  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: TOSKA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: LUNAIA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: NISHA AMAZONICA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: POMAROSA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: SOFRA  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: IDOL JOSE  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK GUNTER



DESIGNER: TAARACH & AMPERSAND  
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# THE ART OF MIXOLOGY

## HOW DANIEL PONSKY REFINES THE COCKTAIL CULTURE IN LAS VEGAS

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By Chanelle Hayes-Sessions

In Las Vegas, where over-the-top shows and giant drinks often steal the spotlight, Daniel Ponsky is quietly doing something far more enduring: teaching people to truly understand what's in their glass. As the resident mixologist at The Cabinet of Curiosities at Horseshoe Las Vegas, Ponsky reshapes how guests think about flavor, balance and creativity. He does it one drink at a time.

"My journey started in corporate America," Ponsky recalls, "bartending for a national restaurant brand and venturing across the board, landing in high-end gastropubs." The turning point came in Culver City, California, at the now-closed Ford's Filling Station under chef Ben Ford. There, he spent more than five years learning the art of farm-to-table hospitality.

"That's where I truly cut my teeth in high-end mixology," he says. "I learned how to evolve cocktails using seasonal and artisanal ingredients, how to understand balancing points and how to build drinks that are both thoughtful and creative."

That foundation proved invaluable when Ponsky joined "Bar Rescue" in 2016 as an expert mixologist. He has returned on and off for nearly a decade, most recently wrapping the show's 2025 season. "The show really gave me insight into how many people have an interest in evolved cocktails featuring mixology



*Above: Daniel Ponsky (Jeff Ragazzo with J3 Creative)*

*Right: Daniel Ponsky's Mixology Masterclass (Jeff Ragazzo with J3 Creative)*

elements," he says. "Having said that, the majority of their passion just needs to be steered in the right direction so they can understand the foundation of what they're looking to unlock creatively. I think it reinforced my understanding of the various landscapes, which I could then teach back to others."

Armed with this experience, Ponsky brought his philosophy to Las Vegas with the opening of The Cabinet of Curiosities in July 2022. The immersive venue combines theatrical storytelling with a hidden speakeasy, called The Lock, giving guests an experience where they don't just watch cocktails being made — they participate.

One of the speakeasy's most popular features is the "Secret Menu." Guests fill out a card indicating their flavor preferences, spirits and moods, and the bartender crafts an original cocktail in real time.

"The bartender is getting as much out of it as the guest because we're not going from a recipe; we're making it as we go," Ponsky says.

That collaborative approach also defines his Mixology Masterclasses, offered Thursday through Sunday on the Las Vegas Strip. "I designed the classes for the at-home enthusiast to help them unlock their own personal style and creativity behind the bar."

The classes are hands-on. Guests move through stations instead of sitting back passively. They learn the fundamentals — when to shake or stir, how to layer flavors and how to stock a home bar intelligently — while gaining insider knowledge. Ponsky shares where professionals source ingredients and tools, how much they cost and how to adapt them for home use.

"By the end, you're going to be able to break down 90% of every cocktail menu you look at now and probably guess right 90% of the time on how





*Above: Daniel Ponsky (The Cabinet of Curiosities)*

*Right: Daniel Ponsky teaches a Mixology Masterclass (The Cabinet of Curiosities)*

that cocktail was built and constructed based on the balancing points and the tips and philosophies that I instill in the class," he says.

Keeping classes fresh is part of the fun. In addition to core workshops — a Prohibition-era whiskey class, a Southwestern agave tequila class and a tiki-style rum experience — Ponsky adapts sessions to holidays, seasons and special events. Past themes have included St. Patrick's Day, Fourth of July, Gatsby-style New Year's and even a WrestleMania-inspired class.

The classroom itself was intentionally designed for interaction. "I didn't want it to feel like a test at the end," Ponsky says. "It's designed to be a 'we teach it and you do it' experience."



If there's one lesson Ponsky repeats in every class, it's this: "Build into the flavor."

"I teach a framework where you start with small, controlled portions and add ingredients gradually," he explains. "Most people put too much of one element and not enough of the other, and it's just a guessing game like throwing darts at a board. That's not how it works. I've developed dozens of cocktail programs over nearly 20 years across 19 states, three continents and even cruise lines. This framework allows guests to experiment while maintaining balance."

Guests often have "aha" moments in class, such as discovering how to make alcoholic whipped creams, how to use one base in three different ways or finally understanding why a drink works. Many return multiple times, bringing friends or booking private sessions. "I've had people take the class five or six times," he says. "They'll bring friends, book private groups and even schedule classes outside normal hours for special occasions."

Looking ahead, Ponsky plans to expand specialty offerings and continue evolving his classes for the at-home enthusiast.

"When you look at craft bartending, with 10 being the best in the world, the average person at home I'd probably put at one right now — Jack and Cokes, vodka sodas, lemon drops, freezer-door Manhattans," he says. "They're all fair drinks, but if you really want to evolve your game and deepen your knowledge of styles, techniques, fundamentals and mechanics — the bullet points we talk about — it's about understanding the full spectrum of the class."

"My hope is that when you walk out, you're closer to a four. That's a dramatic leap, with a really grounded foundation to begin interpreting what the next levels of mixology are all about."

Beyond technique, Ponsky emphasizes creativity and understanding the "why" behind every drink. "You have to first

nail down what type of drink you're making," he says. "Are you shaking or stirring? That choice dramatically impacts the ingredients you use."

The mixology class encourages discussion and experimentation, reflecting Ponsky's mission: to teach guests not just how to make a cocktail, but why it works and how to explore flavor, structure and balance on their own.

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*Mixology Masterclass is offered Thursday through Sunday at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. at The Cabinet of Curiosities. Classes are \$100 per person and include three cocktails, an apron and a recipe card. For class themes and reservations, visit [thecabinetlv.com](http://thecabinetlv.com).*

**Below: Daniel Ponsky's Mixology Masterclass (Jeff Ragazzo with J3 Creative)**



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# AN INVISIBLE AMERICAN FORCE INVADING OUR SOCIETY

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By Joseph Amato

Most people almost never meet the villain in an economic story. They don't shake its hand, see its face or shout at it directly. Yet every person in America has spent the last five years living with it, staring it down every day in grocery aisles, at gas stations and inside their mortgage bills.

That villain has a name: inflation.

Five years ago, inflation felt like an old ghost, something that had haunted the country in the 1970s and then faded into history. Because of the political nature of the times, the media largely ignored it until reality finally set in during the 2024 election.

The economy had been steady for a decade. Even as prices ticked up, it was a gentle, almost polite increase because the dollar remained dependable.

But then came the storm.

The pandemic didn't just lock people indoors. It tore apart global supply chains, shuttered factories, shrank workforces and tested the world's patience. Demand surged long before shelves refilled. Ships waited outside ports, truckloads stalled and companies bid



against each other for the same scarce components.

At first, people barely noticed. A few extra pennies for bread, milk and eggs. A dollar more for gasoline. A delayed sofa delivery. But the trickle became a stream and the stream, fed by money, shortages and a sudden economic thaw, became a flood of discontent and anger.

By late 2021 and through 2022, that flood rolled inland. Inflation hit levels

not seen in 40 years. Prices rose fast enough that weekly shopping lists became small discouragements. A cart that cost \$100 in 2020 cost \$115, then \$125 and sometimes more. Rents surged. Used cars, once a bargain hunter's prize, were suddenly priced out of the market. Gasoline swung wildly with the ever-expanding global crisis, turning daily commutes into budgeting exercises.

Families tightened their spending. Businesses raised wages just trying to

keep their people. And the Federal Reserve, the less-than-silent referee, stepped into the ring with interest rate hikes.

Higher borrowing costs worked like cold water on a blazing fire. Monthly mortgage payments rose, credit card bills grew heavier and business loans became few and far in between as households and companies pulled back instead of expanding their monthly contributions to the economy. It was painful, deliberate and calculated. Inflation slowed slightly but it remained evident and didn't surrender overnight.

By 2023, the narrative began to twist again. Shelter costs cooled. Factories caught up. Store shelves filled more predictably, though not always cheaply. The price of eggs, the poster child of this economic invasion, returned to somewhat reasonable levels. And slowly, Americans stopped seeing every headline begin with the dreaded word inflation.

Still, the damage remained. Prices rarely fall back to where they were before the hikes began. A gallon of milk doesn't automatically rewind the previous two years of steady increases. Instead, inflation behaves like a staircase: The best people can hope for is that the climb in prices slows down and stabilizes as soon as possible, with a slight retraction but never a full retreat to where they started.

By 2024, the nation sighed, exhausted but relieved. Inflation drifted back toward the Federal Reserve's target of about 2%. It wasn't perfect or painless but it became predictable. Wages caught up in many industries, giving workers breathing room. Gas prices calmed, except in states layered with environmental taxes and fees. And families, bruised from the climb, began planning again, saving, traveling and buying with less hesitation.

By late 2025, with a new administration firmly intact, inflation wasn't erased but it was tamed into something familiar. Consumer prices carried the scars

of war, with nearly everything costing more than it once did but at least those scars were no longer growing as quickly.

Now America stands in a new chapter, asking what tomorrow looks like for the average tax-paying household.

Economists will always debate as the Fed consternates, markets speculate and the average household simply prays for normalcy. Two years ahead, the path forward is uncertain and unpredictable but the fork in the road may look something like one of these two options.

In one scenario, inflation continues drifting downward, settling near 2% — steady, boring, manageable. Interest rates soften. Consumer confidence returns. Businesses invest again. Homebuyers reappear, no longer forced to choose between cramped rentals and jaw-dropping mortgages. This is the hoped-for path, a soft economic landing where supply meets demand and the loud dramas of politics and the global economy fade into a background hum.

Or the alternative mindset sees inflation flaring again, perhaps due to geopolitical events that shock the world economy, the unwanted effects of tariffs, maybe from the newly developed supply chain snags, an overheated labor market or aggressive government spending like that seen during COVID. Higher prices will force the Fed to act again and possibly overcorrect. Loans will tighten, growth will slow and recession whispers will swirl as the midterm elections approach.

But as we hope for the best, between these paths lies the most realistic scenario: a quiet middle ground where, despite economic uncertainty, prices don't rise again as dramatically as they had previously, the Fed doesn't overreact and the market corrects itself.

Over the next two years, inflation is expected to behave less like an out-of-control wildfire and more like a controlled

flame, moving around specific sectors, not burning the entire landscape. Medical care may rise faster than the average if Congress doesn't act accordingly, without leaving a bigger burden on the taxpayer. Housing may remain stubborn until construction catches up. Consumer goods — electronics, clothing, household items — could even see price stabilization or mild declines as global production overcorrects.

In this middle ground, Americans learn to live with a world that is simply more expensive but not spiraling beyond the capabilities of the average American's wallet. Companies shift from raising prices to fighting for customers again. Consumers demand value and businesses innovate or lose ground. And wages, slowly but steadily, begin an upward climb to match the price increases of the past five years.

Perhaps the greatest transformation isn't the numbers themselves but how people will think about them and the impact on their daily lives. Millions of Americans, through every generation, now understand the impact of inflation personally. It's no longer a textbook idea but it's the extra \$40 on a grocery run, the delayed dream of homeownership and the salary or hourly negotiation at a job interview.

Inflation has become part of the everyday American vocabulary; not feared, not ignored but respected. And somewhere near the end of this last five-year journey, the villain of the story takes shape. Inflation is no longer the monster in the shadows. It's a force that can be tamed but is never gone, forever tied to ambition, prosperity and growth itself.

Inflation exists wherever life moves forward. And if the next years unfold as hoped — price stability, rising wages and calmer markets — the American consumer will finally return to a place where consumer confidence reigns supreme and we can all afford to live our normal lives again.

# Preserving, celebrating and sharing Filipino American culture.

We are pleased to announce the unveiling of Filipino Town last October 9th and the creation of the Filipino American Museum at the Boulevard Mall in Las Vegas.

(Filipino Town was voted on and approved by Clark County in April of 2025, spanning Maryland Parkway between Flamingo and Desert Inn.)



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# THIRD STREET IGNITING INNOVATION, INCUBATION & INSPIRATION

By Kendall Hardin

The THIRD Street project in Las Vegas, billed as the city's first multi-venue, multidisciplinary arts and media incubator, has signed a 31-year lease to secure its future at 814 S. 3rd St.

Originally built as a multi-screen cinema complex — formerly known as the Eclipse Theaters, Art Houz Theaters and Downtown Cinemas — THIRD Street is now ground zero for a spectacular new home for the arts.

Boasting marquee magician Teller (half of Penn & Teller) as honorary

ambassador, the THIRD Street project is spearheaded by Daz Weller of Vegas Theatre Company (VTC); Ginger Land-van Buuren of Vegas City Opera; Robert Lee and Kelsey Borlan of Laugh After Dark Comedy; Taras Krysa of the Las Vegas Sinfonietta; and project architect Alexia Chen.

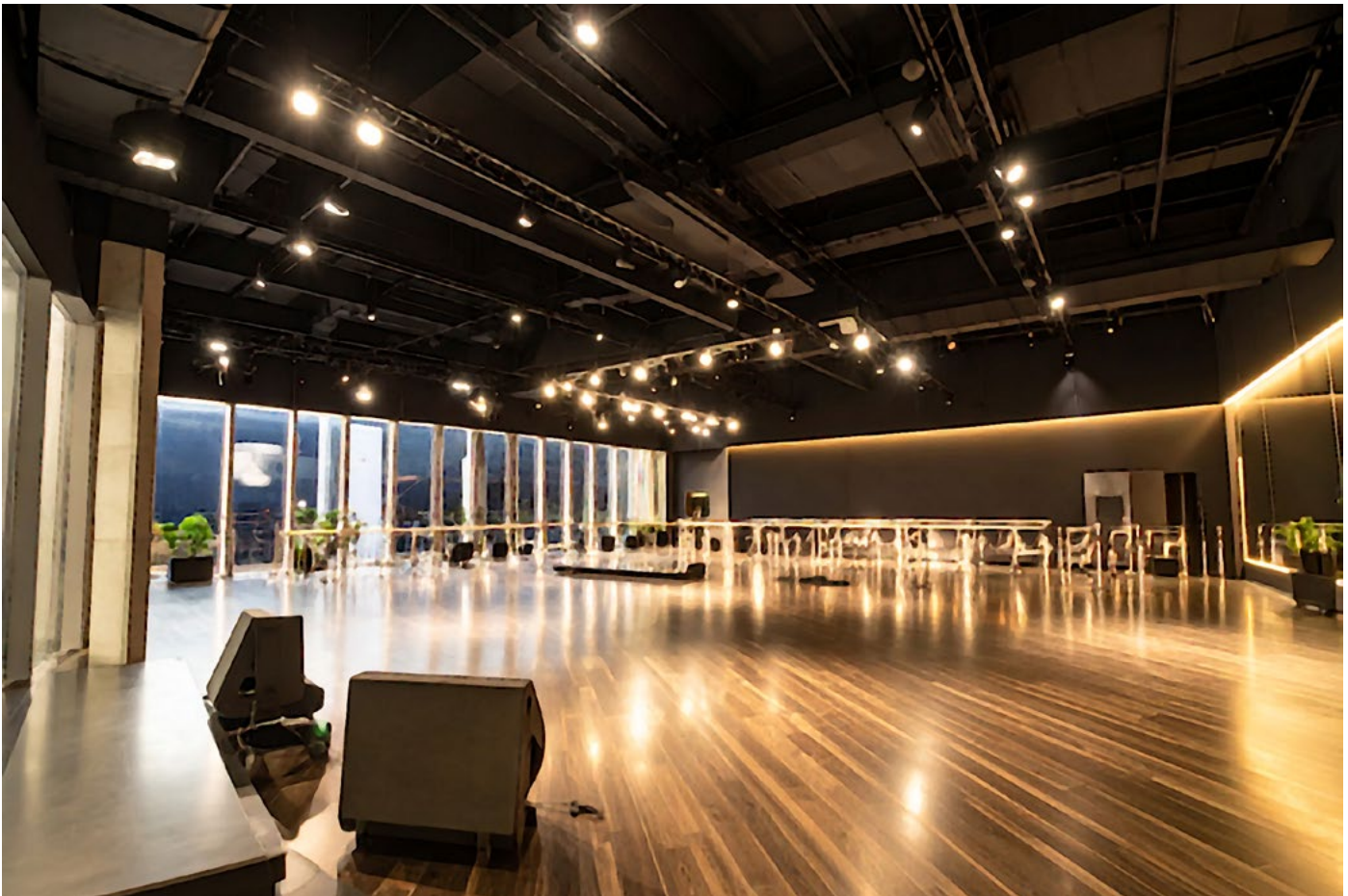
## Building a Quantum Leap for the Arts

The building currently houses eight cinemas, a restaurant and an event space, accessed by escalator from the

reception lobby. THIRD Street's vision is to transform the space into a campus for production, performance and education for artists and creative workers - while providing a quantum leap for the local creative arts industry and future audiences.

"THIRD Street Arts and Media Incubator will be Nevada's first comprehensive media, arts and production facility," explained Daz Weller, co-founder of VTC and CEO of the THIRD Street venture.

*Above: Exterior of 814 S. 3rd St. in the Las Vegas Arts District rendering by Alexia Chen*



"The building will house industry-ready stages and studios, film and broadcast production infrastructure, hands-on workforce training and cultural programming, becoming a true collaborative center for arts and culture in Las Vegas."

Planned for the first phase are six performance and production venues, including a 250-seat proscenium theater, a 150-seat black box soundstage, two 60-seat screening rooms, a 400-person event space and rehearsal hall, and a full media production studio. A 600-seat theater and large-scale production studio will be added in the second phase.

"THIRD Street is the answer to questions Las Vegas has been asking for decades," said Ginger Land-van Buuren, executive director of Vegas City Opera, in a press release. "Where do we go to tell our stories, train our talent and create something truly our own? This is where creativity takes center stage, and the world takes notice."

## Culture at a Crossroads

Without a dedicated incubator for homegrown work, local artists and cultural groups lack affordable rehearsal and performance spaces, as well as leading-edge training and resources to build sustainable careers. This leads to "talent flight" as local creative workers seek opportunities elsewhere.

Las Vegas, the Entertainment Capital of the World, boasts an astonishing array of high-end performance spaces graced by world-class talent and unparalleled production values both on and off the Strip. But the city has become "venue-poor" in keeping up with the needs of a burgeoning local arts and culture industry bursting at the seams.

THIRD Street will help anchor Las Vegas as a cultural and creation capital, powering a thriving creative economy in Nevada — one that can ultimately reach audiences around the world. It will champion Vegas-produced creativity by

*Above: THIRD Street's third-floor rehearsal and event space rendering by Alexia Chen*

providing production and performance spaces, immersive education and workforce development, as well as unique cultural programming and a collaborative home base for artists to develop, produce and share original work.

"Innovation" at THIRD Street means fearlessly building what's next by incubating new ideas and connecting with emerging technology while supporting artists as they launch new work. "Community" at THIRD Street means everyone belongs, with open access, critical connections and shared experiences.

## Workforce Training in Partnership with CSN

Education is central to THIRD Street's mission. It's the engine that runs through every stage, studio, rehearsal room and public program.

It's not an add-on, a sidetrack, or a separate division, but connective tissue of the campus — shaping how work is made, how artists grow and how the wider community participates in the creative life of Las Vegas.

Beginning this spring, through a dual-enrollment partnership with the College of Southern Nevada (CSN), foundational coursework in theater, film, digital media and broadcasting will be launched while the campus is under construction, allowing students to earn certification upon graduation from CSN in media and technical fields.

THIRD Street will also offer introductory classes for children and youth and extend advanced training to teens, emerging professionals, adults and seniors. The curriculum spans the full spectrum of performance and production skills, including acting, directing, voice and movement; design, stagecraft, lighting and sound; film and media production; technical operations; storytelling; arts administration and creative entrepreneurship.

### **Technology to Forge Creative Careers**

As production facilities come online, classroom programs will evolve into fully immersive, hands-on learning experiences inside real productions at THIRD Street. In-house film and sound offerings will expand to include audio engineering, camera operations, editing, live streaming and broadcast production.

Students will link classroom instruction with direct experience inside live productions, working alongside professional artists, designers and technical directors. Technology and mentorship are built into the architecture of THIRD Street so that every production, residency and project functions as a learning environment to build careers.

This model, in turn, creates multiple pathways to employment across Nevada's entertainment, hospitality and media industries.



### **Creating a Pipeline for Intellectual Property**

Approximately 30 months into operations, when the film and sound studio is fully online, THIRD Street will initiate digital media content creation and licensing.

This expansion enables students and resident companies to participate in the recording, editing and distribution of Vegas-created work as intellectual property (IP) to audiences beyond Las Vegas. In this way, THIRD Street's film and music operation also becomes a revenue source for the incubator.

Productions will hire Nevada-based crews, performers, educators and creative vendors to strengthen the state's creative workforce and expand year-round job opportunities.

This ecosystem establishes a full creative and economic pipeline: training talent, employing them on professional productions, developing new IP and distributing assets to regional and global audiences with a return on investment.

### **Cultural Programming with Community Engagement**

THIRD Street will host screenings, performances, festivals, lectures, workshops

*Above: Meet some THIRD Street culture leaders of the future (Son Le)*

and community events that activate the campus and reflect the cultural diversity of Las Vegas. These programs deepen audience engagement, expand access to creative experiences and contribute to tourism, visibility and long-term cultural growth for the Las Vegas Arts District and the city.

"Core to our vision is the arc of experience," Weller said. "From engaging through the website, to parking, dining and remaining in the space after seeing a performance or taking a class, we want people to commune with others afterward.

"It will be worth leaving your home for. THIRD Street also means third space — not your home, not your work, but a place to exchange ideas."

### **The Campaign to Ignite the Future**

To realize its mission and vision, THIRD Street has raised nearly \$1 million toward its \$5 million goal to retrofit its new home.

THIRD Street will occupy approximately 41,500 square feet — encompassing the lobby, all eight cinemas, the



*Above: Daz Weller of Vegas Theatre Company and Ginger Land-van Buuren of Vegas City Opera (Tai Howard)*

*Left: THIRD Street's 250-seat proscenium theater rendering by Alexia Chen*

third-floor event hall and key support areas, with a right of first refusal on roughly 7,000 square feet of adjacent bar and restaurant and retail space to accommodate future growth.

The primary goal of the capital campaign is to fund the space conversions and early operating needs required to launch the campus.

### **A Cinderella Model to Inspire Other Cities**

World-famous magician Teller says he and partner Penn Jillette, now celebrating 50 years as a duo, built their careers in theaters like THIRD Street.

"The scale of space gives new artists a chance to be seen in the best possible light, with the best possible support," Teller said. "Now that Vegas is a real place with a growing arts scene, this is something we can't afford to live without."

He added, "The arts are not just a business or a decoration, but an essential infrastructure."

Mayor Shelley Berkley also backs the initiative.

"THIRD Street will create a one-of-a-kind destination for artistic expression, learning and entrepreneurship," Berkley said. "This dynamic redevelopment aligns with the city's long-term goals for economic diversification, downtown revitalization and community engagement."

"Together, we can ensure this project not only transforms a property, but also uplifts lives — building a more creative, prosperous and inclusive future for all who call Las Vegas home."

THIRD Street's facility, already fully built in a prized location, awaits strategic, turnkey renovations to reshape the space and bring the project's vision to life.

"This opportunity to build a legacy cultural establishment — the likes of which hasn't been imagined in Vegas — will take months, not years," Weller said. "We are transforming what's here into what's next."

"This project and our team are dedicated to creating jobs, training the next generation and ensuring our community has a space to dream, learn and connect for decades to come."

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*The THIRD Street capital campaign invites visionaries, advocates and everyday supporters to help transform THIRD Street into a living campus that incubates Las Vegas talent by uniting performance, education and new technology to create work that begins here and resonates everywhere. To contribute or volunteer, visit [thirdstreet.vegas](http://thirdstreet.vegas).*

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# ABOUT TOWN

## Chic Compass Launch Party at Via Brasil

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

**Right:** (L-R) Scott Harris, Elaine Harris, Sheryl Aronson, Chanelle Hayes-Sessions, Brian G. Thornton



**Above:** Chic Compass covermodel Naomi Parisette

**Above Left:** Darryl Braswell, Naomi Parisette, Jevon Johnson

**Left:** (L-R) Ann Parenti, Laura Henkel, Sheryl Aronson

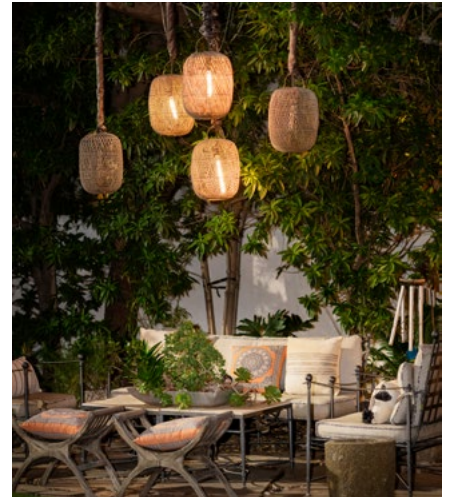




**United Way Southern Nevada's Alexis de Tocqueville Society Fall Soirée** (Photography by Photos by Alex S. courtesy of United Way of Southern Nevada)

**Above:** (L-R) United Way of Southern Nevada President and CEO Samuel Rudd with his wife Susanna

**Top Right:** Garden sitting area at the home of Dorit & Ronnie Schwartz



**Above:** Sculpture by Dorit Schwartz and hors d'oeuvres

**Left:** Dorit Schwartz, Angelo Carvalho, Las Vegas Mayor Shelley Berkley

**Below:** (L-R) Shane Rogers, Janet Quintero

**Bottom Left:** (L-R) Doc Phineas, Lela Hastings, Harry Taylor, Lauren Allen





**2025 Youth for Youth Holiday Concert**

(Photography by Justin Harrison @iamjustincred)

**Above:** Members of Plant Based, a jazz band from Utah, opened the 2025 Youth for Youth (Y4Y) Holiday Concert (L-R) Ethan Wunder, Hudson Barlow, Talmage Brammer, Michael Brinton, Ayden Branch, Jaron Wunder, Eric Cutler, Jason Rhodes

**Right:** (L-R) Stacey Gualandi announces a lucky raffle winner during the event with raffle elves Samyee Kwan, Brykin Jones and Angelina Dang

**Below:** Clark County Commission presented a proclamation on behalf of Youth for Youth Holiday Concert. (L-R) Skai Jones (Y4Y Chairwoman), Roxy Jones (Y4Y Founder), Daniel Serrano (County Representative), Brooke Neubauer (The Just One Project CEO), Zeola Braxton (Clark High School Principal)





**Lynette Chappell's Birthday Celebration at the Jungle Palace** (Photography by Cashman Photo)  
**Above:** Photo op with Lynette Chappell "The Evil Queen" of Siegfried & Roy beside a glittering gown and other memorabilia  
**Top Right:** Lynette Chappell beside her birthday cake



**Above:** Doc Phineas and Harry Taylor  
**Left:** Stanley Uyeda, Robert Dolan, George Carden, Alexandra Castro, Lynette Chappell



**"Broadway Reimagined: A Chamber Music Tribute" at the Rita Deanin Abbey Art Museum**  
 (Photography by Nick Powers, Empower Photography)  
**Bottom Left:** (L-R) Flo Hillman, Jeanne Bavaro, Joan Sobel, Julie Waldman Stiel  
**Bottom Right:** Attendees enjoy a program curated by Dr. Alexandria Le, with additional performances by Philip Fortenberry on piano, Brandon Buckmaster on violin, Giovanni Juliano Venezia on viola and Lindsey Springer on cello





**United Way of Southern Nevada's Alexis de Tocqueville Society at The Doberman Drawing Room in the Arts District** (Photography by Laura Henkel)

**Above:** Ginger Land-van Buuren, Daz Weller, Alice Sauro, Lucy Formato

**Top Right:** Laura Sanders, Ann Parenti



**Above:** Adreanne Harris-McMillian

**Above Right:** Dr. Alexandria Le

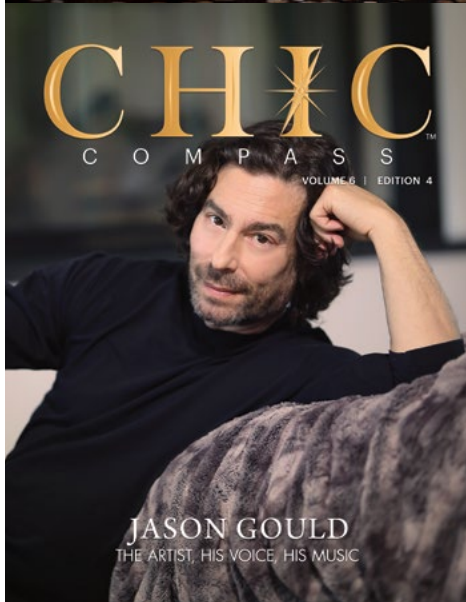
**Left:** Lori Johnson, Marianne Johnson and Mercedes McGill

**Bottom Left:** Sam Rudd and Dulcinea Rongavilla

**Bottom Center:** Lauren Allen and Devin Winnie

**Bottom Right:** Parand Baillie and Shane Rogers





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Photograph of Jonathan Karrant  
by Joseph Donato (Cashman Photo)



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