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YUCCA BREVI-FOLIA

FALL 2026

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INSIDE

Music
Nature
Culture
Art Tours
Astrology
Civic Soul
Conservation



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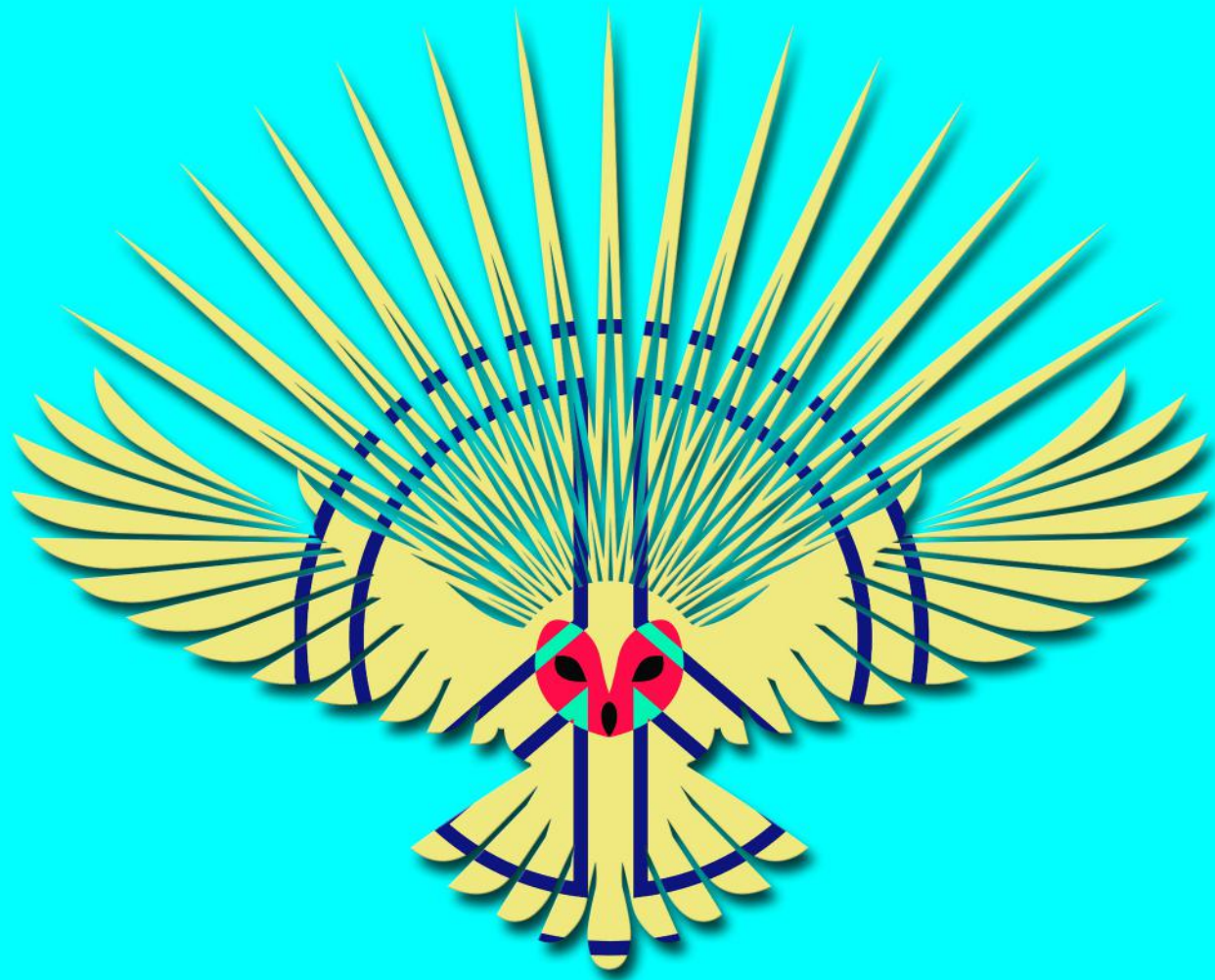
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FROM THE DESK OF THE PUBLISHER



Yucca Brevifolia Magazine™ is more than a magazine... it's a movement. In a time when so much feels uncertain, we are all searching for meaning, for connection, for something real. Desert living isn't just a place. It's a state of mind. And the world is watching drawn to the vastness, the stillness, the freedom that lives here.

My hope is that through these stories, others feel inspired to live more authentically... to step beyond boundaries and into a life that feels true. Art. Music. Nature. Healing. Health. Spirituality.

What we are witnessing is a new renaissance. And here in the desert, we are quietly leading the way showing what it looks like to live with intention, creativity and soul. This is about inspiration. This is about hope.

Together, as a collaborative and committed team, we will reach into every corner of the desert seeking voices, perspectives, and experiences that deserve to be seen and heard. At the heart of this work is a commitment to diversity, inclusivity and collaboration. We need the full community to participate because only through many voices can we tell the whole story.

This is not just about publishing. It's about building something meaningful together. The desert is vast stretching across high and low yet there is no separation. Art, music, culture, conservation, healing, and spirituality are alive across this entire landscape. It may look different from place to place... feel different... but it is all connected. My intention is to dissolve those perceived barriers. To connect our sister cities through storytelling, collaboration, and mutual support.

I call it cross-pollination.
I call it building bridges.

Because when we come together when we share, uplift, and align, we create something far greater than ourselves:

A collective energy.
A shared vision.
A thriving desert community.

Lisa Schyck

Lisa Schyck
Publisher



HONORING BOB ARONSON

Philanthropic Leadership in Action



Yucca Brevifolia Magazine™ is proud to recognize Bob Aronson for his invaluable role as a philanthropic advisor and champion of our Community Impact Program.

Through his guidance and generosity, the “Gift of Print” initiative has become a powerful force for good opening doors for nonprofit organizations to be seen, heard, and supported. Bob’s commitment to uplifting community voices has helped transform a simple idea into a meaningful platform for connection and awareness.

The Community Impact Program is built on the belief that every nonprofit deserves visibility. By pairing compassionate sponsors with mission-driven organizations, the program provides nonprofits with professionally designed, full-page features at no cost to them. These placements allow organizations to share their stories, highlight their work, and reach audiences they might not otherwise access.

The impact is both immediate and lasting. Nonprofits gain credibility, expand their reach, and engage new supporters, while readers are introduced to causes that inspire action and deepen community ties. Through print, these stories take on a tangible presence, one that validates and amplifies the important work being done every day.

Bob Aronson’s leadership has been instrumental in bringing this vision to life. His belief in the power of storytelling and community connection continues to elevate voices that deserve to be heard.

We are deeply grateful for his partnership and proud to celebrate his lasting impact.



CONTRIBUTORS



Lisa Schyck
Editor in Chief



Carlos Reyes
Executive Creative Director
& Editor



Bob Stevens contributing photographer. Has been a short and feature film director and spent over 20 years as a top automotive shooter and directed 90+ TV spots—including two Super Bowl ads—along with films and documentaries. Now based in Joshua Tree, Bob lives with his partner among the desert wildlife.



Joy Corradetti (Mystical Joy) is a longtime spiritual practitioner who has four decades of experience as an astrologer, tarot reader, numerologist, intuitive guide, meditation teacher, and spiritual counselor. An ordained minister and life coach, Joy is dedicated to helping people reconnect with purpose, compassion, and inner wisdom.



Natasha Beranek is a professor of anthropology and sociology and has been a resident of the Hi-Desert since 2022. Dr. Beranek has contributed her skills in the social sciences and philosophy to several desert-themed creative and scholarly projects, including the organization of a multidisciplinary international conference



Sailene Ossman is a longtime cannabis advocate, entrepreneur, and author dedicated to elevating plant-based wellness through education and hospitality. She is the author of CBD Cocktails and the founder of immersive cannabis experiences, women's retreats, and curated social events that promote community, empowerment, and mindful living.



Jacqueline "Jacque" Guevara is the Executive Director of the Joshua Tree National Park Association and has a strong background in non-profit leadership and a deep love for the desert. A longtime Coachella Valley resident, she raised her family across the region and now lives in Desert Hot Springs with her husband.



Stacy Davies is an award-winning journalist and media literacy and cinema studies educator.



Stacey Solie is a Wonder Valley resident, and the owner of Strategic Storycraft, a writing, editing and production company.



Audrey Philpot & Stefanee Freedman
Copy Editors



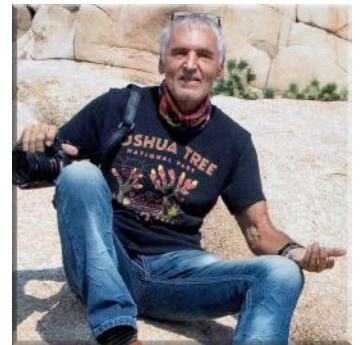
Lisa Rae Black is a musician and proprietor of JT City Limits, a non-profit concert producer. She and partner Paul Forester produce The Morongo Music Festival and play in the bands Black Sugar, Hammer of the Ozz, and Queen Bitch. She holds a Masters in Human Geography from Cal State Northridge and has a professional background in accountancy. Lisa has called the Hi-Desert her home since 2017.



Tammy C. Greenwood is a writer and print-maker. She is an MFA candidate in poetry at San Diego State University and holds a BA in Studio Art from Cal State San Bernardino, specializing in Print-making. Her artwork has been shown in Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside, Idyllwild, Joshua Tree, Claremont, and is held in private collections. Her poetry appears in *The Greensboro Review*, *Poetry Rattle*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Whale Road Review*, *SWWIM*.



Crystal Harrell-Schawacker has been a featured writer in various publications and outlets within the Coachella Valley, Inland Empire, and Morongo Basin and currently works as a senior promotion producer at KESQ News Channel 3, where she creates video content, scripts, and graphics to promote stories that impact the Greater Palm Spring area. She is also a reporter for the Hi-Desert Star newspaper in Yucca Valley. editing and production company.



Rudi Weislein contributing photographer. Rudi is a Southern California-based photographer known for fashion, beauty, and event work. A former painter, he's spent 25+ years creating editorial, celebrity, and commercial images, including work in *Vogue*. Rudi is active in the Palm Springs art scene where he is known for his "rudi event shots."

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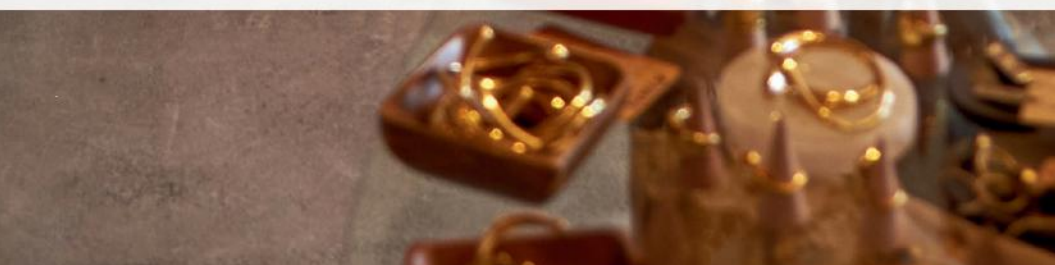


► We are always seeking the voices and visions that define our landscape. If you have a story to share, or want to feature your brand, business, or practice in the magazine, we welcome your collaboration. Connect with us at hello@yuccabrevifoliomagazine.com. ◀



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LEGACY. IMPACT. CONTINUITY.

Protecting the Magic that is Joshua Tree

By Jacqueline Guevara



Courtesy of JTNPA

The majestic boulders, stacked upon one another like a giant's playthings; spiky Joshua trees standing sentinel alone or marching into the distance in rows of spindly soldiers; great, sweeping vistas where the earth and sky blend into a fantastic feast for the eyes—it's apparent from the moment you enter Joshua Tree National Park you've been transported to another world.

During sunrise and sunset, the area becomes a technicolor fever dream. In the rain and snow, it morphs into a chilly, spooky scene interspersed with wisps of clouds and shadow. During gentle, breezy afternoons, it's paradise, and in the fierce summer heat, this desert will cleanse your soul (and your bones, if you're not mindful).

The first peoples and original stewards of the desert, who lived on

this land before being displaced by the march of "civilization" in the form of settlers, miners, and ranchers, treated the Joshua trees as sentient beings, as brothers. There are tales of tribes from the low desert making the trek up to the area that is now the park to visit with these beings and pay their respects. There are also tales of vertices located throughout the desert, with those in Joshua Tree

holding positive energy. Find a corner of the park where you can be alone for a few minutes, and it's easy to feel those peaceful, calming vibes, even today.

In the early 1930s, Minerva Hamilton Hoyt, a wealthy socialite from Pasadena, noticed that several of her well-to-do neighbors were visiting the desert and poaching native cacti and other plants. As a member of the Pasadena Garden Club, and a frequent visitor to the desert herself, Minerva was concerned about the future of desert plants in the area—and took action. Dubbed “The Apostle of the Cacti,” she used her considerable wealth and privilege to influence then President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to designate 825,000 acres of the Mojave and Colorado deserts as Joshua Tree National Monument. In 1994, “the monument” was re-designated as Joshua Tree National Park.

Over the years, boundaries have morphed and the size of the park has slightly diminished, but one thing has remained constant: the need to protect and steward the land. The lands inside the park have indeed been set aside in alignment with the National Park Service's mission statement to “preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources” therein “for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.” But, as the saying goes, it takes a village to fulfill that mission—and that's where the Joshua Tree National Park Association comes in.

The Joshua Tree National Park Association, or JTNPA, is one of several local non-profit organizations that partner with Joshua Tree National Park to provide support for the park's programs, projects and personnel. Charged with



Courtesy of JTNPA

staffing, stocking and managing Joshua Tree's six visitor centers and park stores, operating park-centered educational programs like the Desert Institute and Discover JTREE, as well as conducting membership, fundraising and “friend raising” efforts, the JTNPA is uniquely situated to continue the work begun by Hamilton Hoyt: to help mind the native flora, fauna, and land itself, and to educate and invite others to become stewards of the land.

Founded in 1962 as the Joshua Tree Natural History Association, the JTNPA in its current incarnation began in 1994. Since then, the organization has donated tens of millions of dollars of in-kind support and cash donations to the park, with roughly four million given in 2025 alone. A team of only 50 employees powers this small but

mighty organization, which relies on its community partners, members, and donors (known as “Park Lovers”) to shop, donate, participate and volunteer to make such meaningful contributions to Joshua Tree possible.

JTNPA-funded projects like Desert Plant Restoration enable park staff to gather, store, and study Joshua tree seeds and collect data on how rising temperatures and changing environments impact the park's star plant—work that in part is supported by Minerva's own Pasadena Garden Club. Meanwhile Desert Bighorn Studies have allowed researchers and scientists to map the movement of the park's herd, which is now at approximately 10% of its previous size.



Courtesy of JTNPA



Courtesy of JTNPA

Based on the data collected, the park has closed popular hiking trails during summer months to enable the herd to access crucial watering holes freely and comfortably. The Tortoise Tracking Program has similarly shown park staff the patterns of tortoise movement and assisted in monitoring the health of the population, which, in turn, informs decisions around habitat preservation. The JTNPA also funds elementary school field trips and distance learning programs so that future generations of public land stewards are given the opportunity to visit the park and engage with the many wild spaces that call it home. 🐢



more!



What JTNPA Funds in Joshua Tree National Park

Wildlife Conservation

JTNPA funds the Desert Tortoise Tracking Program and the Desert Bighorn Monitoring Program, which allow scientists to improve how these iconic creatures interact with human-made infrastructure, conduct outreach, and restore disturbed habitats.

Native Plant Restoration

JTNPA supports the Native Plant Restoration Program, which includes seed collection, rare plant monitoring, and Joshua tree refugia restoration with the goal of maintaining biodiversity, preventing soil erosion, supporting local wildlife, and promoting sustainability.

Science & Research

Science and research are foundational to understanding and preserving this unique area of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts. JTNPA helps support the park's ongoing efforts, including through continuing Minerva Hamilton Hoyt's legacy of forward-thinking conservation.

Education

Expanding education in the park and surrounding areas is one of JTNPA's core purposes, achieved through Desert Institute field programming, DiscoverJTREE youth education, funding the Keys Ranch Ranger Tours, and Junior Ranger publications.

The Arts

JTNPA is deeply invested in both park art programs and community events.

Visitor Services & Park Infrastructure

One of JTNPA's core focuses is facilitating incredible experiences for the park's millions of annual visitors. We give both cash and in-kind aid for visitor services, including infrastructure improvements.

Cultural & Historical Preservation

JTNPA is committed to supporting the park's preservation goals, including architectural restoration and cultural efforts taken in collaboration with the park's affiliated tribal nations.



Visit joshuatree.org/what-we-fund to learn more and make a one-time or monthly contribution to these projects and programs.

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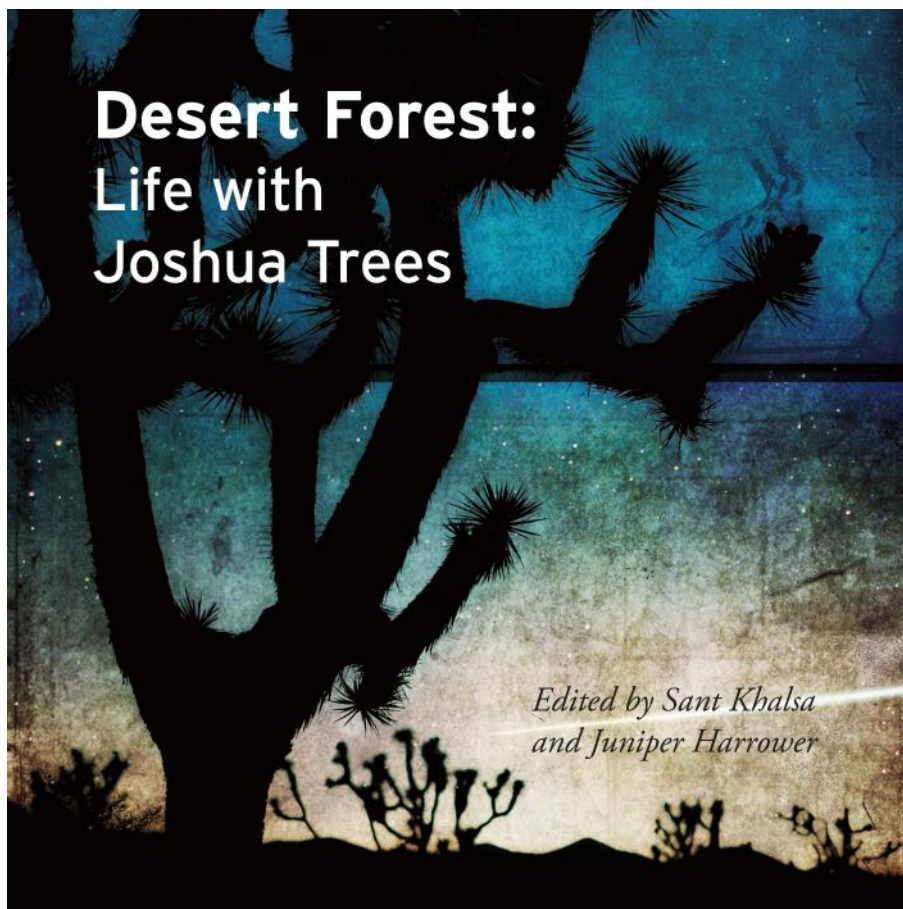
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LOVED TO DEATH

Rescuing the Joshua Tree Muse

By Tammy Greenwood



Desert Forest: Life with Joshua Trees book front cover. Cara Romero, *For the Cahuilla Boys*, 2014, Limited Edition Archival Fine Art Photograph, Printed by the artist on metallic paper, 45 x 30 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.

Stiff and ungraceful... the most repulsive tree in the vegetable kingdom. One can scarcely find a term of ugliness that is not apt for this plant.

It's unimaginable that what is now considered the darling of the desert, the Joshua tree, was once met with such short-sighted snubs as colonizers made their way West.

In *Desert Forest: Life With Trees* artist/activist Sant Khalsa and

ecology expert Dr. Juniper Harrower explores the history of the once maligned Joshua tree, its function as an interdependent species, its rise to iconography, and now, its possible extinction.

Produced by MOAH Lancaster with the Inlandia Institute, this 300-page tome weaves together a variety of essays from a range of experts in photography, painting, sculpture, poetry, and scholarly content, and while it reads as a

lamentation, MOAH director Andi Campognone's foreword makes it clear that "this narrative is not solely one of struggle. It is also a vibrant tapestry of resilience, where artists explore themes of restoration, symbiosis, and the enduring power of nature."

In environmental writer Chris Clarke's essay, we learn of the first discovery of the yucca tree, as well as its symbiotic relationship to the yucca moth and interdependence with various wildlife. While the first documented photo of the Joshua tree taken in 1880 by Carlton E. Watkins sets the stage for



Cara Romero, For the Cahuilla Boys, 2014, Limited Edition Archival Fine Art Photograph, Printed by the artist on metallic paper, 45 x 30 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.

Manifest Destiny, the image could have been taken today and would not look out of place alongside Bill Leigh Brewer's 2013 "Queen of the Valley."

Dr. Cane West's essay recounts the legend of the Joshua tree name being connected to Mormon pioneers in the 1800s who saw in the "outstretched arms of the tree" the prophet Joshua "guiding the Israelites to the Promised Land." This imagery is likewise depicted in Cara Romero's cover image, "For the Cahuilla Boys," as well as Diane Best's acrylic on canvas "Hidden Dawn," where even dwarfed by boulders, the Joshua remains center stage, casting its silhouette across anything but desolate backdrops.

Despite its biblical name, the Joshua tree's cultural history is hardly reverent—early settlers even tried (and failed) to turn it into paper. It was later surrounded by a nuclear testing ground. The haunting imagery connected to this area continues through photographer and essayist Darin Boville's recounting details surrounding the



Juniper Harrower, Disrupted Symbiosis, 2020, Ink, recycled acrylic, Joshua tree seed oil, and Joshua tree fibers (Joshua tree materials collected prior to species protections), 24 x 36 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.

area's largest ecological disaster, the 2020 Dome Fire in which more than a quarter of the Cima Dome Joshua tree forest was lost—an estimated 1.3 million trees—reshaping one of the world's most important habitats.

Science blends with verse as ecologist Daniel Oren Hastingswaxes poetic in his essay with lines such as "I succumbed to the

subtle charms of that stark landscape. Plants that could survive in the exterior in the extreme winters seemed much more worthy of wonder than a freeloading raspberry bush in an Edenic meadow. This Eden of the desert depiction is made even more real by Maryrose Crook's surreal, "Kingdom of the Moth."



Maryrose Crook, Kingdom of the Moth, 2023, Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.



Diane Best, Hidden Dawn, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 73 inches. Courtesy of the artist



Gerald Clarke, Going, Going, Gone, 2023, Ink on paper, 50 x 40 inches, Courtesy of the Artist.



Gerald Clarke, *Going, Going, Gone* (detail), 2023, Ink on paper, 50 x 40 inches.
Courtesy of the Artist.

We see what transpires when science meets art with the intention of saving a species in Harrower's interdisciplinary work "Soil to Sky: A Joshua Tree Love Story", in which she reveals the symbiotic relationship between mycorrhizal fungi. Harrower's artwork goes further, incorporating Joshua tree seed oil and fibers. In "Disrupted Symbiosis", Joshua trees reach into a woven underworld of abstractions that blur the boundaries of where one species ends and another begins.

The once-slandered desert tree also famously made its way into iconic art and culture through the U2 album *The Joshua Tree* in 1987. Thousands of fans flocked to the desert and literally loved the tree to death, as described by Shana Nys Dambrot: "It had been growing in Death Valley for centuries (because that's how long it takes each tree to

grow), but now it's dead. There was a plaque, but it's been removed because people just started hugging nearby trees to death instead."

It seems fitting that a tree that evolved over centuries would come to symbolize resurrection, resilience, and rebirth—and it still stands as an example of perseverance, in spite of unabated obstacles. In Gerald Clarke's dramatic pen and ink work "Going, Going, Gone", we see what appears to be delicate imagery of a Joshua tree, but upon closer observation, the spikes of its leaves spell out salient warning.

Biologist Dr. Cameron Barrows proclaims the Joshua tree as "the hub of a species wheel, the spokes are the multitude of species that use or depend on the Mojave Desert icons." This is an apropos description for this collection, reminding us of all the things that are depen-

dent on the Joshua tree, and, if speaking of the spirit, can we include ourselves in this list as well?

Desert Forest: Life with Joshua Trees indicates that we, too, are "spokes in the wheel," forging us into the fate (or rescue) of this beloved contemporary icon. But, the question remains—will readers be called to action by this tapestry of science, celluloid, acrylic, and myth making, and is it possible to love something to death? 



The Desert Forest: Life with Joshua Tree book is available at the Joshua Tree National Park Visitor Centers, Hey There Projects in Joshua Tree, Desert General in 29 Palms, Hoof & the Horn in Yucca Valley



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53. PLUM KELLY CREATIVE - @plumkellycreative. A collection of vintage and modern clothing, shoes, and more.
54. PALS OF PALMS-N-PAWS - @palsofpalmsnpaws. A collection of vintage and modern clothing, shoes, and more.
55. ROADRUNNER PRINT & SHIP 6255 44th St. - @roadrunnerprint. A collection of vintage and modern clothing, shoes, and more.
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HIGHWAY 62 OPEN STUDIO ART TOURS

Still Going Strong at 25

By Stacey Solie

If the vibes are right, Chuck Caplinger can intuit a stranger's zodiac sign, the make and model of their car, and even their name.

"I'm somewhat of a clairvoyant. Psychic, if you will," Caplinger told me when I stopped in at his studio to learn about the origins of the Highway 62 Open Studio Art Tours (the "Tours"), now entering their 25th year.

As Caplinger tells it, the seeds for the Tours were planted back in the 1990s, when, during a ride on their Harley, he and partner Holgie Forrester made a pit-stop in twenty-nine Palms for coffee. It was during that pause that he foresaw a bit of the future.

"There's going to be an arts renaissance here," he recounts saying to Forrester, "and there's a five-year window of opportunity for me to be involved and make an impact. We've got to move here."

Before long, and like many creatives before and since, the couple left Los Angeles for the Hi-Desert. They bought a home in twenty-nine Palms, close enough to LA that Forrester could continue her acting career, and Caplinger set up his studio on the ground floor. He soon joined what was already a vibrant and growing community of artists and went on to co-found the Mo-



Photo by Carl Rice - Chuck Caplinger is a co-founder of the Morongo Basin Cultural Arts Council, the organization that sponsors the Hwy 62 Open Studio Art Tours

rongo Basin Cultural Arts Council (MBCAC), the organization that sponsors the Tours.

Where the Magic Happens

The Highway 62 Open Studio Art Tours offer visitors the chance to meet artists where the magic happens. To see the brushes and the kilns, feel the heat coming off the sand, and squint into the sunny desert skies.

The Tours have evolved since their 2001 inaugural year when Lucia Grossberger Morales was in charge. A creator of the Designer's Toolkit, the 1979 program that let people use a stylus to draw on a graphics tablet, Morales was already a legend. That year, about 20 artists participated, most of them based in twentynine Palms. Last year, the Tours' artist headcount surpassed 150, and this year could be even bigger: with studios scattered along a wide corridor—45 miles stretching from Morongo Valley to Wonder Valley—it's now among the largest open studios tours in the nation.

Pack Food, Get the App

This sprawling presence with its long, sandy roads, sharp rocks, and soft shoulders can make navigating the Tours challenging. While there is no "how-to" guide, a good starting place might be with Other Desert Radio podcaster Alexandra Martinez, who made the trek last September and documented it on her *Pequeña Cretina* series.

"I feel like with the state of the world right now, getting out to look at art can sometimes feel a little ridiculous, but also really necessary," Martinez says in the episode

as she makes her first stop at the studio of Douglas Blanca and Jillian Sandell. After grabbing a coffee and strolling along a path with sculptural installations made from repurposed materials, Martinez' hesitancy is gone. "I'm already feeling super inspired and ready to look at more art and really be immersed in it," she says. She also has some tips.

"Pack food," Martinez told me. "Don't think of it like going into the Park, where you need to be survival prepared, but, I need to make sure I can actually process this art by not being super hungry or thirsty." She also recommends downloading the app. "Using the app and creating the experience for yourself is really important. All these places are super spread apart."

Connecting to Laughter

In Landers, Cybele Rowe's studio makes for an unforgettable stop. Her two-and-a-half acre sculpture garden is populated with

dozens of her own chthonic ("underworld") ceramic creations, positioned amidst the creosote, teddy bear and pencil cholla. Large-scale—some are the size of a baby elephant—these beings pulse with swooping, swerving, inside-out energy.

Early in her career at City Art Institute in her native Australia, Rowe and classmates fabricated the vehicles and set pieces for director George Miller's post apocalyptic classic *Mad Max* (1979), and while Rowe's style is entirely her own, something about this connection clicks: the distinctive boldness of the work, the unique vision, the way it seems to have been birthed from the land.

Rowe says she mainly went to art school to use the kilns, and now she offers others the same opportunity: kids who come by during the Tours are sent home with a bag of clay and a jar of glaze, and Rowe even fires their pieces for them. "I'm very connected to the laughter and creativity kids naturally have," she says.



Photo by Carl Rice - Chuck Caplinger at work in his twentynine Palms home studio



Photo by Carl Rice - Mark Heuston at his solar-powered Wonder Valley studio

While she regularly shows at international art fairs in New York, Chicago and other major markets, for Rowe, the Tours are not about the sales, they're personal. "I've had some really good clients who found me through the art tours," she says, "but I do it because I'm part of the community."

Good Art Isn't Always Comfortable Art

Driving from Landers to Yucca onto 62 and then east to twenty-nine Palms and then even further east to Wonder Valley entails dropping about 1500ft in elevation. The lower you go, the more the waving-armed Joshua trees fall away, the heat kicks up a notch, and the pur-

ple Sheep Hole Mountains become the dominant backdrop.

At Mark Heuston's studio—a pink, solar-powered, one-room cabin off Shadow Mountain Road—many of his works are made from scrap metal such as aluminum discarded by auto manufacturers, or sheet metal that blew in on the wind.

Two rows of Heuston's signature bells hang from the ceiling, the

design inspired by tuning forks, and the breeze prompts the bells to sing to each other in clear, bright tones. Typically inspired by desert life—snakes, tortoises, iguanas—there is also a set of hand-forged shackles on the work bench that Heuston boldly wore at a recent demonstration to make a visual statement against cruelty after he witnessed how immigrants are being treated. “I saw some of the really terrible things they were doing to the immigrants,” he laments. “They were literally putting them into chains and shipping them off.” He felt he had to do something. “Good art is not always comfortable,” he notes.

Heuston’s art is his expression, and his studio is his refuge from the world. “The studio is an environment where I’m in charge, I’m in control, and I can get into my zone,” he says. “It’s very centering.”

Patronage, Community and Social Traffic

Gretchen Grunt, a multi-media artist who, for a stint in the mid-2000s, took over primary responsibility for running the Tours recalls some of her early training.

“The main thing I learned in art school is that you need to be a part of an art movement, and you need a patron.”

That mid-aught period was a peak time for making a living in the arts, says Grunt, who also teaches classes out of her studio at the twenty-nine Palms Creative Center.

“From ’03 until the banks fell apart in ’08, it was a goldmine,” she says. “We were selling so much art it was unbelievable. In 2008, everything fell apart financially. Overnight people just stopped buying art.”



Photo by Carl Rice - Mark Heuston has been participating in the Hwy 62 Open Studio Art Tours since 2003



Photo by Carl Rice - Panda Landa turned to quilt-making during the pandemic and now it's become a major component of their creative work

Like all markets, the art markets have had their booms and busts. Compared to other artistic epicenters like Los Angeles and New York City, the Hi-Desert offers artists breathing room. But there are trade-offs.

Caroline Partamian, a sound and visual artist who has lived and worked in New York, the Bay Area, and the Hi-Desert believes the basics are not all that different, noting

“there is mutual support between artists, excitement for new ideas being executed and brilliant programming in beautiful spaces.” However, each setting has limitations.

“Obviously, there’s a lot more money in places like New York. Here in San Bernardino County, we’re operating in one of the lowest HPIs in the state,” says Partamian, who also works as the operations

director at Compound Gallery in Yucca Valley and Executive Director of DESERTRADE, an artist residency in Twentynine Palms. HPI is the Healthy Places Index, a data and mapping platform for tracking economic, educational, social, transportation, housing, environmental and healthcare resources.

“It’s also so much more expensive in New York than it is here—space for a studio, space to present work. But out here, our access to social traffic is limited.”

It’s this proliferation of real life, in-person social traffic that the Highway 62 Open Studio Art Tours solves for the Hi-Desert, at least for a few weekends out of the year.



Photo by Carl Rice - Panda Landa, wearing Neapolitan, one of their quilted creations



Photo by Carl Rice - Cybele Rowe with a recent piece

New Discoveries Amid the Silence.

One of the pleasures of the Tours is discovering up and coming artists, such as Panda Landa, a Flamingo Heights textile artist who plans to participate in this year's tours for the third time, exhibiting a range of work—including quilts, an art form they first started exploring during the pandemic.

For many creatives who are drawn to the desert for the stillness and the absence of crowds, the Art Tours can be overwhelming. Landa estimates that last year, between 60 and 80 people came through their studio each weekend—half local, half from other SoCal cities.

"I'm such an introvert," Landa says. "I was nervous to open up my studio, but it was worth it because of all the people I got to meet." 🐦



Photo by Carl Rice - The land around Cybele Rowe's home studio in Landers is filled with her otherworldly sculptures


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DESERT ROOTS TO DESTINATION EVENT

The Evolution of the Yucca Valley Film Festival

By Crystal Harrell

When the Yucca Valley Film Festival (YVFF) launched eight years ago, it wasn't designed to chase trends or replicate the prestige of big-city festivals. Instead, it grew organically from the desert itself: its people, its history, and its long-standing creative undercurrent.

"There has always been a strong artistic community here, with many artists and film professionals living in the desert," co-director and founding co-creator Matt Beurois explains. The festival didn't invent that culture. It gave it a stage.

Yucca Valley's cinematic DNA runs deeper than many might expect. Beurois points to the legacy of nearby Pioneertown and a moment just before the festival's launch that felt almost symbolic.

"Shortly before we launched the festival, Tim Burton filmed a scene from *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* at the local Circle K," Beurois recalls. "Film culture has long been part of the landscape here and YVFF was built on that foundation to bring people together."



Yucca Valley Community Center, 57090 Twentynine Palms Highway - Yucca Valley

While the desert setting was essential, the festival's early success hinged on trust and community buy-in. "In successful projects, it's often more about people," says Beurois. That trust came quickly.

Support from then-Mayor Dr. Robert Lombardo and City Manager Curtis Yakimov arrived the same day, then the ball was passed to Community Services Manager Sue Earnest, giving the fledgling festival the confidence to move forward. But the true test came opening weekend.

"What ultimately made the difference was that people showed up for the first edition of the festival," Beurois says, and that first year set the tone: a red carpet, international films, and a masterclass led by Midnight Express camera operator John Stanier established a standard that felt ambitious, but not out of place.

"It was the right balance of ambition, excitement, and entertainment," Beurois says, noting that despite being a small town, Yucca Valley rose to the occasion. "More importantly, the community filled the room throughout the entire event. That response proved the appetite was real."

Beurois and festival co-founder Auregan were not newcomers to cultural production. "We had been organizing cultural events and film festivals and working in the film industry for about ten years at that point," he explains, and from the beginning, YVFF was "conceived to serve

and entertain the local community and to give it something to take pride in."

Independent filmmakers quickly became the heart of the festival. "Independent filmmakers are our core guests and always have been," Beurois emphasizes. YVFF does not impose themes or content requirements. "We will consider any filmmaker if the film is strong and brings something interesting, enjoyable, surprising, or beautiful to audiences."

Launching the festival, however, was far from easy. Even with full backing from the Town, Beurois describes YVFF's early days as an uphill climb.

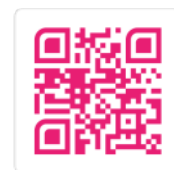
"We had to create a brand and build an event from scratch," he says, then establish and maintain a reputation year after year. "Nothing comparable to YVFF has emerged in the Hi-Desert since, simply because it is a massive amount of work."

The commitment is ongoing. Beurois spends 10 to 11 months out of every year planning the next edition, and since 2018, it's never stopped. "It's a lifestyle commitment," he says.

Over time, the festival's outward appearance has evolved while its structure remains familiar—a weekend event with a marathon of screenings and in-person activities. Now it also offers not only the longest red carpet in the Hi-Desert, but expanded programming and a fully-transformed community center, as well.

Despite its growth, the festival's core values remain unchanged. "Give residents and the local community a family-friendly event they can enjoy with the kids. We didn't try to change life in the desert. We just created an event that worked by staying true to what makes this place special," Beurois says.

This November 6-8, the Festival celebrates its 8th year so be sure to check out the litany of offerings, from film screenings to Q&A panels, a kids' section, and photo booths – admission and popcorn are always free! 🐦



film.fest

Foodie 5: Five Things You Should Put in Your Mouth

- **Hummus, Yucca Kabob, Yucca Valley.** You might think there's not much to write about hummus. It's just garbanzo beans and tahini, after all. That's where you'd be mistaken. Finding good hummus is hard. Finding *great* hummus is next to impossible, but whatever these guys are doing, they're doing it greater than great. Kick Sabra to the curb already. \$9.49
- **Harriet's Tri-Tip Chili, Pappy & Harriet's, Pioneertown.** This chunky chili is basically a side of beef in sauce—no beans, no screwing around—and it's probably the best thing you'll ever stick in your mouth. \$13-\$20
- **Ice Cream, Nice Dream, Yucca Valley.** Coral and Trevor went from running a wildly successful Joshua Tree Farmers Market ice cream booth to building a full-sized “pastries after dark” restaurant. Launched in April, Nice Dream offers onigiri, made-from scratch ice cream (including vegan varieties), espresso, sugar water, and pastries, making this unique dessert spot exactly what the hottest desert fans crave. \$5-\$15
- **Street Corn, Red Dog Saloon, Pioneertown.** It's not always on the menu, so be sure to ask, because this Wild West corn on the cob smothered in cotija cheese, butter, chili powder, lime juice, and cilantro is pistols-down the best street corn you'll ever eat. \$6
- **Soyrizo Breakfast Burrito, Yucca Tree Eatery, Yucca Valley.** This hidden gem is out of eye shot for most visitors and remains secret. It's hard to get both healthier and yummiier than one of their hunkin' breakfast burritos. The soyrizo is a big fave, but both the vegan and all-meat versions are equally notable. And remember: what

happens in Yucca stays in Yucca, ya snitches!
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The Essentials: Pitstops Not to Miss

- **Old Timey Tuesdays, The Copper Room, Yucca Valley.** Once the stomping (and drinking) ground of Frank Sinatra and Gram Parsons, The Copper Room still lights up the night with genre music several evenings a week and we can't get enough of The Melancholy Babies' western swing, New Orleans jazz, and American songbook favorites. Reservations encouraged
- **Save the Meow Meows Cat Lounge and Shop, Yucca Valley.** Whether you're in the Hi-Desert for respite and relaxation or to build your new prepper identity, everybody needs a meow-meow break. This quaint cat lounge and shop is also a nonprofit rescue that rehabs and re-homes abused and neglected critters. It's a safe haven for the pussycats and a total recharge for feline aficionados. Don't worry—your own cat will never, *ever* know. \$10 donation.
- **Pioneertown Petting Zoo, Pioneertown.** When you find yourself in a Wild West saloon town, tramping around in your boots and hats, what could be a better way to fully immerse yourself in the vibe by stepping into the petting zoo? Filled with the sweetest hoofed, web-footed, and taloned furry and feathery friends, you can hold tiny goats, scratch pot-bellied pigs, and hand-feed frolicking fowl. And if the zoo is closed, you can still interact with the adorable critters through the fence with the help of gumball machines filled with corn and seeds. \$10 admission or grab some quarters from the General Store.

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FROM THE HIMALAYAS TO THE HI-DESERT

Lessons in Change and Harmony

By Ken Lee



The Gaden Shartse Monks at Hi Desert Arts, Yucca Valley, during the dissolution ceremony of the sand mandala. Photo Courtesy of Ken Lee

The notion of impermanence can seem like a lofty idea. We knock on a table. We talk to a friend. We hold *Yucca Brevifolia Magazine* in our hands. All of this seems permanent enough. Yet, when we attended a Tibetan dissolution ceremony at Hi-Desert Arts in Yucca Valley, we're reminded why understanding that all things are temporary can help us live more fully.

The Gaden Shartse monks spent many days at the arts gallery, painstakingly creating a beautiful and intricate Tibetan sand mandala dedicated to Manjushri, the Buddha of Supreme Wisdom, forming it grain by grain. Crafted with vibrantly-colored geometric patterns, the mandala was a visual expression of how wisdom ushers in harmony to meet chaos in the universe. Then, the monks brushed it

all away in the dissolution ceremony. It was impermanence made visible.

As one of the monks pointed out, the most important reminder of this lesson is to make the most of our lives while we're here. "We should try to make a positive impact for ourselves and those around us," one had said. It was a reminder that everything is temporary, and wisdom, according to Buddhism,



Speaking about creating a better world for everyone. Photo Courtesy of Ken Lee

arises from understanding that change. The monks' mesmerizing prayers echoed this understanding.

Afterward, the monks carefully packaged the scattered sand into small plastic bags and gave one to each person in attendance. The remaining sand was taken to Joshua Tree Lake where it was released to spread its blessings and peace back into the world. This was wisdom dissolving back into nature to create harmony.

Seeing the dissolution ceremony near our home felt like a full circle event for me and my wife. We had met in a support group for Tibetan people and culture, and through our work with Tibetans, we attended meetings, vigils, protests, ceremonies, and Losar (Tibetan New Year) celebrations. At several of these events, we met Geshe Gyeltsen, the founder of Thubten

Dhargye Ling in Long Beach, California—one of the oldest Tibetan Buddhist centers in the West—along with many other members of the Tibetan community. Gyeltsen was a Tibetan Buddhist monk trained for 20 years in the traditional Gelug Geshe system and studied at Gaden Monastery's Shartse College near Lhasa before leaving Tibet. He later became a teacher and human rights activist in the United States. This was a far cry from Yucca Valley, where we had just witnessed monks from Gyeltsen's monastic lineage create the mandala.

These monks had traveled from India, not Lhasa, however. Gaden Monastery now exists in Mundgod, Karnataka, in South India. In 1959, the Chinese military invaded Tibet, forcing many Tibetans to flee across the snowy Himalayas into

India. Despite crushing poverty, India opened its arms to approximately 100,000 Tibetan refugees. Many settled in the Himalayan regions, while others, such as the monks of Gaden Monastery, resettled in South India.

Although we never visited Gaden Monastery itself, my wife Lisa and I traveled extensively to other Tibetan settlements and monasteries in South India, Himachal Pradesh, Dharamsala, Ladakh, and areas near the Ganges River, including Mussoorie and Dehradun. In some ways, the expansive Himalayan Mountains where Buddhism was born share something in common with the desert. Sparse landscapes, extreme weather, and vast skies mirror Buddhist insights about transience, non-attachment, and looking beyond the self.



Geshe Gyeltsen at the Global Day of Action on March 31st, 2008. Photo Courtesy of Ken Lee



Their silence and broad space encourage contemplation. I have no doubt this is why the desert attracts so many artists, drawn by its vastness, its ability to strip life down to essentials, and its invitation to deep reflection. And the lessons offered by Buddhism can have very practical benefits, whether one identifies as Buddhist—or a creative—or not. In the United States, mindfulness, for example, is used by millions for stress reduction, mental health, and focus. Paying attention to the present moment, rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future, can reduce stress and bring clarity and calm. Embracing impermanence can also cultivate gratitude for what we have, anchor us in the present, and foster a healthier relationship with uncertainty.

And, as the monks at Hi-Desert remind us, these lessons ultimately help us make a positive impact—for ourselves and for those around us. 🐦



The mandala blueprint offers a map of where place the colored grains of sand. Photo Courtesy of Ken Lee



A closeup of the detailed sand mandala at Hi Desert Arts in Yucca Valley. Photo Courtesy of Ken Lee



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GLIMPSES OF THE JOSHUA TREE DREAM VOL 2

Women of the Mojave: Homes & Lifestyles

By Staff Writer

In this moving and deeply personal work, Lisa Schyck reflects on a transformed life. She rises from addiction, loss, and a defining moment of reckoning into over a decade of sobriety, purpose, and creative rebirth. Grounded in resilience and guided by an unwavering commitment to growth, her journey becomes a powerful testament to the possibility of healing and starting over.

That transformation ultimately led her to Joshua Tree, a place as striking as it is soulful. With its otherworldly landscape of vast open skies, sculptural boulders, and desert terrain, Joshua Tree draws a certain kind of person: those seeking authenticity, creativity, and deeper meaning. For many, including Schyck, there is an immediate knowing upon arrival: a quiet yet undeniable sense of belonging. This energetic pull, often described as a vortex, becomes the catalyst for both personal evolution and creative expression.

Part memoir, part visual journey, and part cultural documentation, *Women of the Mojave* emerges from this connection. At its heart are the women of the desert (artists, entrepreneurs, healers, and visionaries) who are modern-day pioneers living boldly and authentically. Through intimate





Glimpses of the
JOSHUA TREE DREAM
—VOLUME 2—

WOMEN of the **MOJAVE**

Homes and Lifestyles
Lisa Schyck
Photographs by Bill Leigh Brewer
Essays by Zara Kand



glimpses into their homes and work spaces, Schyck reveals the seamless intersection of environment and identity. These spaces are more than aesthetic; they are reflections of courage, vulnerability, and a commitment to living from the soul.

What elevates the work is Schyck's personal lens. Her own story quietly underpins the narrative, adding depth and sincerity without overshadowing the voices of the women she features. The result is a balanced and heartfelt portrayal of a community rooted in perseverance, generosity, and a shared desire to bring light into the world.

Set against the raw beauty of the Mojave, the book positions the desert not merely as a backdrop but as an active force, one that challenges, shapes, and ultimately

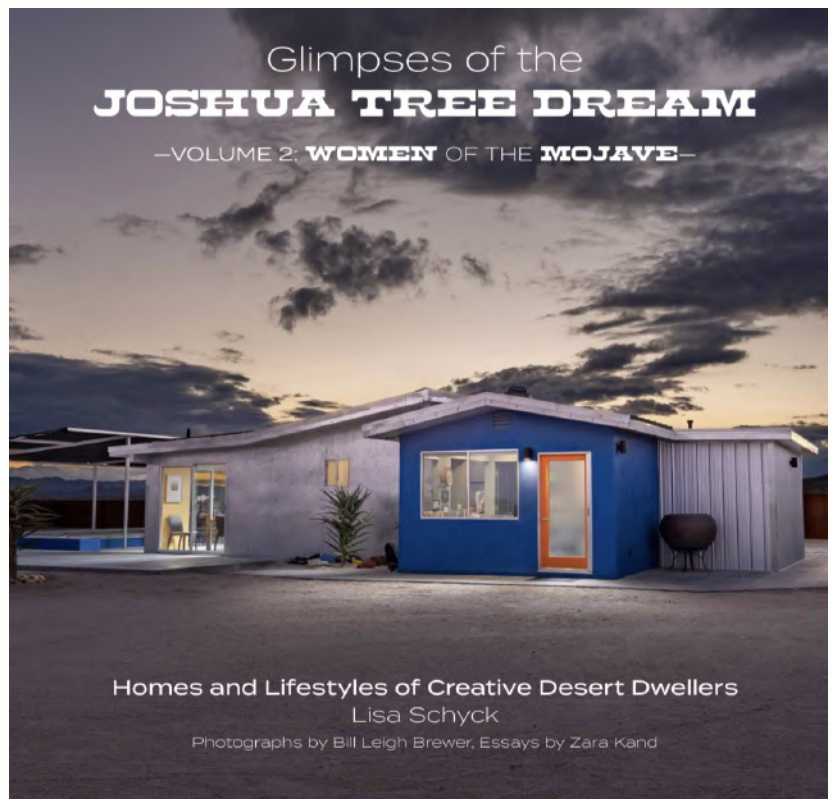
transforms those who choose to call it home. While life here comes with its hardships, such as extreme climate, economic uncertainty, and isolation, Schyck reveals a deeper truth: faith, trust, and community sustain and uplift.

The collaboration with photographer Bill Brewer brings a refined visual clarity to the project, capturing the quiet power and nuance of each space, while writer Zara Kand adds a thoughtful, connective depth through her essays. Together, they create a multidimensional portrait that captures not only how these women live, but why.

Ultimately, *Women of the Mojave* reads as an invitation into a place, a community, and a way of being. It encourages readers to reconnect with themselves, embrace possibility, and live with intention and courage. In a time when many

are seeking deeper meaning, this book offers both inspiration and a gentle call to action: to live authentically, create boldly, and trust that transformation is always within reach. 🐦





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SONGS OF THE SAND

A Tour of Hi-Desert Music Studios

By Natasha Brie Beranek

The whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind. — Ralph Waldo Emerson

There is an intangible force behind Hi-Desert artistry. Musicians who live and work here speak of awe, humility, and the desert's "magic." Like Ralph Waldo Emerson, they experience nature as something sublime and reflective—a landscape that mirrors the inner world.

"There is something about the panoramic view," says Christopher Thorn, owner of Fireside Sound in Joshua Tree. "It's profound. There's just this 'x' factor that delivers. People don't usually want to write songs in the studio—it's scary when you're paying by the hour. But out here, you can hear yourself think."

The desert's quiet and vastness strips away distraction. Removed from the churn of social media and the relentless economics of Los Angeles, artists slow down. "In LA, your rent is five times more, so your hustle has to be five times more," Thorn explains. "Here, you can make more pure art. In LA, you feel like the center of the universe. Then you come to Joshua Tree and realize you're a speck of dust on a ball floating through space."

Still, relocating to the Hi-Desert is more than a weekend escape. What compels established musicians to build their lives here?

Christopher Thorn—guitarist for Blind Melon and The Afghan



Photo by Heather Thorn

Whigs—began visiting the desert in 2007. Through touring, he met Dave Catching of Kyuss. "For the record, none of us would be here if not for Dave," Thorn says. "He's the pioneer."

Early visits to Catching's studio felt different from LA sessions—more communal, less pressured. Thorn brought an acoustic guitar and journal. "I wrote more songs in those first few years than I did in twenty years in LA." Each drive up the hill toward the windmills brought calm. "When we found a place out here, it was life-changing." Fireside Sound, like Catching's Rancho de la Luna, is hybrid—analogue warmth fused with digital precision. Thorn gestures toward his 1973 API mixing desk,

prized for its punchy, "fat" sound. "I work with a lot of kids who make records in their bedrooms," he says. "But can you make the best record in your bedroom? No. They want to run it through this gear and fortify what they've been working on."

Inside, the studio feels intimate—dark paneling, Chesterfield sofas, Southwestern blankets. A framed 1993 Rolling Stone cover featuring Blind Melon hangs nearby alongside shelves of rock biographies. The room feels like a sanctuary against the blaze outside.



Rancho de la Luna



Courtesy of Rancho De La Luna

Despite Dave Catching's status as the "OG" of Hi-Desert music production, he is strikingly humble about the legacy he has created. "I'm just happy that people still wanna come out and make music!" he says, his exuberant French Bulldog, Chunk, making circles around the coffee table as we chat.

It would take days to fully absorb the studio's offbeat tchotchkes—a Howdy Doody head, colorful feathers, an empty bag of Cardi B-themed potato chips, an Alabama license plate reading "QOTSA" hanging next to a rack of cowboy hats. The pièce de résistance is a guitar fashioned out of a bedpan.

"Out of all the arts," Catching continues, "music has suffered the most. The business has always been

pretty rough, but when streaming happened, everything got more expensive—gas, touring, instruments—and no one's making money. It would be easy for everybody to say, "fuck it," but people still save up money and come here to make great music. Ultimately, you make music because you have to."

Catching founded Rancho with Fred Drake in 1993. And he echoes Thorn's reasons for moving here: the desert's magic, its relative affordability and lack of distractions, and its sense of community. His neighbors include his QOTSA/Kyuss colleague, Patrick "Hutch" Hutchinson, Eagles of Death Metal's Brian O'Connor, singer-songwriter Victoria Williams, and

his business partner in Rancho de La Luna mezcal, Bingo Richey.

Catching acknowledges the lure of "desert rock" to those who make the trek to his studio. "When my friend Chris Goss, who produced Kyuss, first shared their record, he told me, 'I'm going to make them sound bigger than God!' I've worked with Chris a lot, so I know how to get those heavy sounds." In addition to Queens of the Stone Age, artists who have recorded at Rancho include Foo Fighters, Arctic Monkeys, and The Desert Sessions musical collective.



Courtesy of Rancho De La Luna



Rancho de la Luna sign courtesy of Natasha Beranek



Dennis Moody



Photo by Martin Moody

Producer Dennis Moody's resume spans Missy Elliott, Miles Davis, Aerosmith, and Iggy Pop. Unlike Catching, he struggled at first to lure colleagues east. "They'd say, 'We don't want to come out there and work!'" he laughs. "They wanted to recharge, hike, drink beer."

Eventually, Moody understood: the desert's value lies in clarity. Rather than importing outside acts, he invested locally, working with regional artists and helping them realize their creative visions. "That's what's important to me."



Gatos Trail Recording Studio



Photos by Mark Maryanovich

Founded in 2015 by Dan Joeright, Gatos Trail is known for its drum room and onsite lodging. Joeright, a graduate of Berklee College of Music, first came to the Hi-Desert out of curiosity. "I grew up in Ohio—it felt like the moon."

He later recorded the Live From the Mojave collection during the pandemic, capturing performances at a natural desert amphitheater before mixing them back at the studio. Wind toppled mic stands, sand threatened equipment. "Another desert experience for the books," he says.

Opening Gatos Trail felt risky. "I was nervous no one would come. But I kept thinking, if I love it here this much, someone else will, too." He describes the area's pull as a "creative magnetism" strong enough to draw things from artists they might not access elsewhere.



Photos by Mark Maryanovich



Potato Alligator Studio

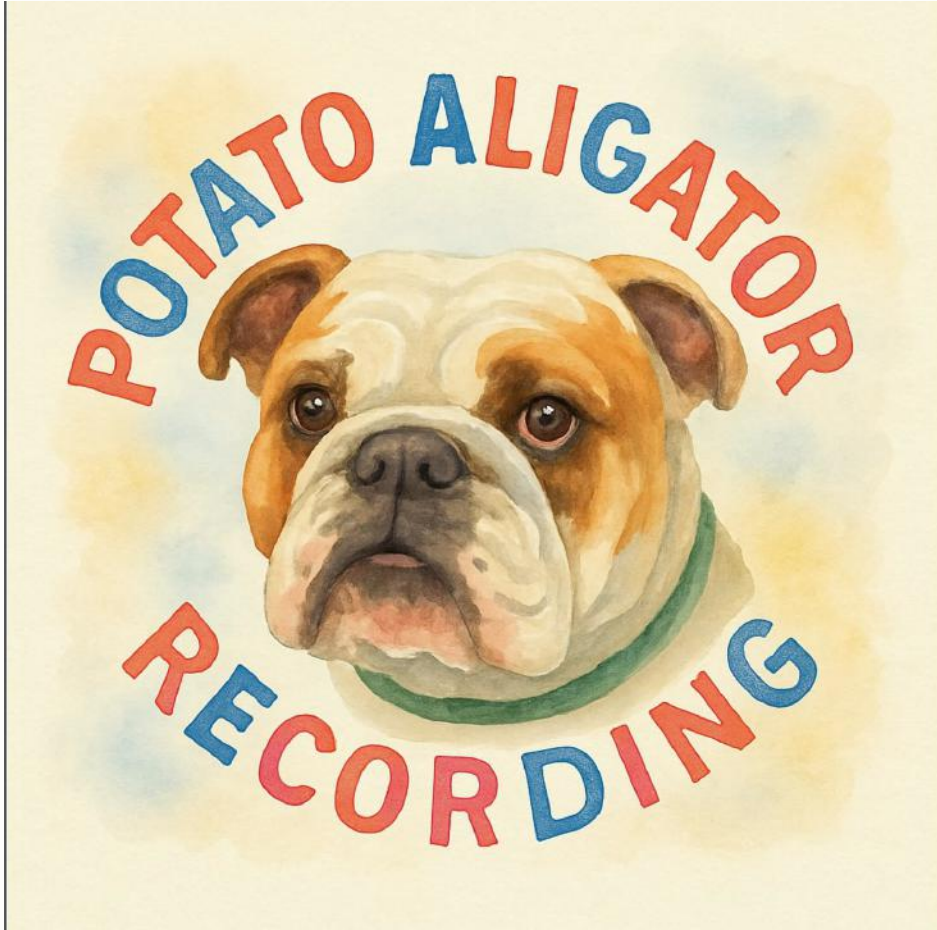


Photo by Patrick Mitchem

Patrick “Tricky” Mitchem moved to the desert as a child and never lost his sense of wonder. “There’s a rawness here,” he says. “People aren’t trying to overimpress. They’re here to create.”

His Morongo Valley home studio—named after his rescue bulldog Ruthie—uses different rooms for different sonic textures. “If it feels too much like a professional studio, artists get intimidated. Sometimes all you

need is a warm chair and a studio dog.”

Mitchem came of age alongside Kyuss and the ‘90s desert rock scene, but his work now spans genres. He performs weekly in Indian Wells and teaches at a non-profit providing contemporary music education to Coachella Valley Youth. Flexibility, he says, is key.

“For 20 years, everyone’s called me ‘Tricky’ because I can do so many different things.”

Coyote Run Studio



Courtesy of Coyote Run Studio

Ian Stahl and Dan Friedman represent a younger wave of Hi-Desert studio owners.

Friedman, trained in theoretical computer science, initially moved from Silver Lake to Joshua Tree for space to build and experiment. Together, they launched Coyote Run as a studio, live sound company, and event venue.

“There’s no record label coming to save us,” Stahl says. “We have to be multi-faceted.”

That DIY ethos mirrors the broader community. “People here give themselves permission to try things,” Stahl observes. Friedman agrees: “There’s no specific genre. It’s accepting of all expressions.”

Stahl calls Joshua Tree “the Laurel Canyon of the 2020s”—an affordable, collaborative haven reminiscent of another era. Coyote Run has hosted eclectic events, from hybrid music-and-gaming festivals to international collaborations and socially conscious projects.





Photo by Carl Rice

Goat Mountain Recording

Pat Kearns, host of Z107.7's *Local Music Showcase*, sees the desert's diversity firsthand. "There are different scenes here," he says. "Unexpected collaborations are when music gets interesting."

After working in Seattle and Portland during and after the grunge era, Kearns relocated to the

Hi-Desert, drawn partly by economics and partly by possibility. Goat Mountain Recording opened in Landers in 2020 and runs off solar power—an off-grid studio pairing vintage analog equipment with modern converters. "The quiet out here lets you hear what's already in your head," Kearns says.



Photo by Pat Kearns

Songs Buried in the Sand

Toward the end of our conversation, Thorn shares a story. Bruce Springsteen once visited Fireside Sound for an album cover shoot and documentary work. Thorn joked that songs were buried all over the property. "You can come grab them anytime," he told him. Springsteen nodded. "I know."

And that's how Joshua Tree feels to those who create here. The songs are waiting—in the silence, in the wind, in the vastness. You only have to slow down long enough to hear them.





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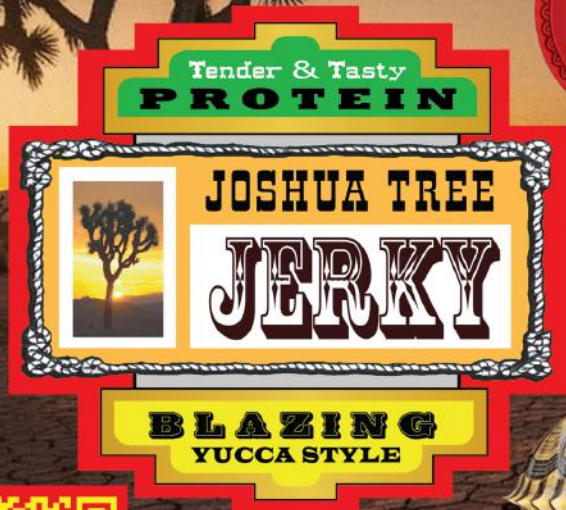
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ON THE EDGE

How Ron Mesh's high-end Studio B is redefining the desert sound

by Crystal Harrell



In Indio, a new chapter of the Coachella Valley's music story is unfolding, moving beyond festival stages and into the precision of studio sound. At the center of that shift is studio owner Ron Mesh, whose Studio B is positioning the desert as a serious destination for modern music production.

Mesh's path to the valley began with a move from Los Angeles to Palm Springs in 2016. After co-

founding Church Studios in Cathedral City as a private recording facility, Mesh identified the need for a more accessible, specialized environment. Studio B emerged as that next step—an intimate mixing space rooted in both high-end technology and desert sensibility.

What distinguishes Studio B is its emphasis on immersive audio. Built around Dolby Atmos capabilities, the studio moves beyond tra-

ditional stereo mixing into a three-dimensional listening experience. A 7.1.4 speaker configuration means sound is no longer confined to left and right channels, but instead surrounds the listener, offering artists new creative possibilities of how their work is experienced. While similar technology exists in major cities, its presence in Indio shows that cutting-edge production is no longer limited to industry hubs.

That shift is supported by the environment itself. The quiet of the desert creates a level of sonic control that is difficult to replicate in dense urban areas. Studio B has been carefully engineered to take full advantage of that stillness, with extensive soundproofing and structural isolation ensuring a pristine recording and mixing space. The result is a studio that prioritizes clarity, detail, and immersion.

Equally important is the sense of discretion and ease that comes with operating in Indio. The city's low-key atmosphere allows artists to move in and out without the visibility or pressure often associated with larger markets. Combined with the physical space to accommodate touring setups and the relative affordability of the area, Studio B offers a level of flexibility that aligns with the evolving needs of working musicians.

Mesh's connection to desert music culture extends beyond the Coachella Valley into the Hi-Desert, where studios like Rancho De Luna helped define a raw, experimental sound that has influenced generations of artists. That legacy continues to inform the region's identity, even as newer studios like Studio B introduce advanced technologies and contemporary workflows. Together, they represent a spectrum of desert sound from analog grit to immersive precision.

The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival and Stagecoach brings global attention to Indio each year, and that means the city has become more than a performance destination. The weeks between festival weekends have increasingly become opportunities for rehearsals, production, and collaboration, drawing artists deeper into the local creative ecosystem.

At the same time, the broader Coachella Valley is experiencing steady growth in its music infra-



structure. New studios continue to open, and a network of local talent, ranging from emerging bands to established producers, is becoming more visible. This expansion reflects a decentralization of the industry, where artists are no longer tethered to traditional cities like Los Angeles or New York to access professional resources.

Studio B fits squarely within that evolution. It is both a product of the desert's longstanding creative spirit and a signal of where that spirit is headed. By combining advanced audio technology with the unique advantages of its location, the studio offers a compelling alternative to the conventional recording experience.

As the desert continues to at-

tract artists seeking both inspiration and independence, spaces like Studio B suggest that the future of music production may be quieter, more immersive, and increasingly rooted in places once considered outside the industry's core. 🐦



Studio B

THE MUSIC DOCTOR IS IN

Joshua Tree composer Natasha Marin's cycle of life—owls included!

By Stacy Davies



Photo by Juan Rodriguez

Music is connection. It doesn't matter what human creates it, which part of the world it comes from, or whether it was heard by three people or three million, music builds bridges. It can also offer us glimpses into other worlds, as well as the realization that we are more alike than we are different.

In fact, in Dr. Natasha Marin's academic paper *The Role of the Comparative Method in a Global Approach to Music and Music Education*, she writes "...music education of any genre or tradition [is] part of a field unifying us as one global race [and] allows us to consider all musical traditions as equally valuable contributions to human culture and view their diversity as a testament to our ingenuity."

This sentiment, along with the ideals of equity and accessibility, is a foundational part of Marin's musicality as a composer and performer, as well as her work as a global music educator. While the Joshua Tree-residing, Russian-born, classically-trained pianist and harpsichordist may have an illustrious background in performance and collaboration, however—from appearances at the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Hall to LA's Schoenberg Hall, and piano duos with Gerald Robbins and Dmitry Rach-

manov—these days, her focus is pointed toward the magical and mysterious sounds and landscapes of her arid home. And that certainly includes the musical hoots from owls.

Yucca Brevifolia Magazine: *Are you composing with owls now?*

Natasha Marin: [Laughs] We have some owls in the area, and one night when we were sitting outside there was an owl perched on the neighbor's tree and it was just hooting, but that owl took 15 minutes or more doing its call. It was a distinct melody, and I was able to write it down, because after a while I thought, well, I guess it wants somebody to memorize it.

And you could tell what notes it was hooting?

[Recites the exact tones from memory]

It was seriously like 20 minutes. And the quails, the quail has its own call, which for me connects to French composer Olivier Messi-

aen, who cataloged the different calls of the birds and transcribed it for piano and wrote a whole album, so I love it.

I would definitely buy a single of Electronic Duets with Owls! Speaking of . . . you debuted your first electronic music album Songs of the Desert in 2024. How did the composing process differ from classical composition?

It's interesting, because while I was trained as a classical pianist and then transitioned to harpsichord, since pretty much school-age I loved electronic music, especially the pioneers of the genre like Tangerine Dream. So, for me, there is no contradiction between classical piano and the electronic music medium, but as far as being able to compose, if you're within acoustic instrument realms, you're much more limited, and I never ventured into electronic because of how complicated it was at the time. My transition was actually predicated upon technology catching up with what I wanted, and then that happened. Now, it's literally just my computer that plugs into a full-size

Yamaha keyboard piano and that's all I need. It's very intoxicating to have so many possibilities within just one machine.

Do you use the same structures as classical music or more of a stream of consciousness creation?

For me, the visual aspect was very important for the album, and especially having descriptive titles and some kind of chromatic aspect. I'm closely connected to Baroque music, so within this particular album, I use those techniques, such as the ground-based variation for "Storm," and then "Harpsichord Air" that directly links to Samuel Barber. Much of the song forms are classical A-B-A, and it's all really a story, a personal reflection of my daily life—going from "Awakening" to "The Evening Star." It's kind of like a cycle of life in the desert, from waking up and being there, to flying over cinematically on the way to "Integratron." Some of the sketches for the pieces I've had since I was in school, so when I started writing the album, I pulled them out and used some of the themes. "Memories" was one of those. And in "Evening Star," I use extensive modulation, wind sampling, some acoustic keyboard and voices. It's a polyphonic texture.

What are your thoughts on Generative AI in electronic composition? Do you see it as a positive?

Well, it's definitely making everything more equitable. Like punk rock was supposed to make music creation more accessible to anybody who wants to pick up a guitar and play three chords, right, and even though punks deny it, it's much more complex than that. Gen



Photo by Ron Tanji

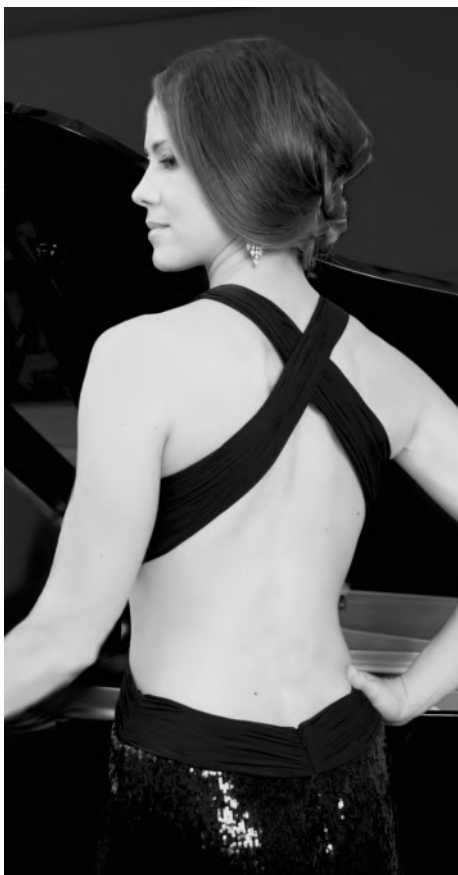


Photo by Bonnie Schiffman

AI can certainly throw together certain beats and rhythm in a genre but, obviously, the human element is the one that hopefully still has the advantage. That's where the individuality, where the thematic factor becomes important, because you can program a machine but it's still humans who first figure out what they want to express as part of their human emotions.

Oh no, you mentioned punk rock. Now we have to talk about the pink-tutu'd elephant in the room.

[Laughs] Yes, Cheech Marin is my husband.

"My momma talk to me/Try to tell me how to live!" Sorry. But I do need to know how the hilarious Pedro photo shoot came about.

[Laughs] Cheech and Chong at some point had a reunion tour, and we were in Australia or Canada, and after the show, his Pedro cos-

tume was laying in the hotel room and I was like, wow, this is too tempting, and I put it on. When we came back from the tour, my childhood friend, who is a fashion blogger, suggested we do a photo shoot. Cheech and Chong impersonation photos are a big thing.

Where did you get the lowrider?

The photographer! He was so inspired by the whole idea that he brought it and we were like, if we're going to do it, let's do this thing. We parked it right off of PCH where Up in Smoke was shot, right by the house that we used to live in, in Malibu. It was all just kind of spontaneous.

Your marriage is definitely an interesting collaboration!

It is. We have an age difference, we have a difference of background, so what he does, he does on his own, but we both have some kind of arts background that we connect to in daily life. If there were no interest in the arts, I think it could have been boring.

And the two worlds certainly meet in the Marin Salon series you created.

It started around 2012 or 2013 and was about connecting our backgrounds in arts and music. Essentially, it started from his close connection to the artists, and the musicians on my end, and we figured that it could be a good blend of those different realms. They're private events. We usually invite a musician and an artist to our home, and there's a music performance with some kind of presentation from the visual artist. Sometimes,

we collaborate with different organizations and causes, depending on what it is.

This also seems to tie into your love of music education, equity and accessibility.

Before we started doing the salons, I didn't realize there is a huge segment of the population who didn't have that classical music background because it was the only thing I knew. So, it definitely informed my mind about what genre is, and how accessible music is or is not. Music, whether it's classical or electronic or something else, is one of the most essential ways that we as humans communicate. The most important thing is that people receive it, because it's a message we all need. 🐦



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Throughout the decades, the organization has supported economic development, tourism, local entrepreneurship, and community engagement across the region.

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Tonya Chiu
President / CEO
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THE LIZARD KING IMMERSIVE

*A 25th Anniversary Celebration of HWY 62's
Open Studio Art Tours*

By Natasha Brie Beranek



Bingo - Photo by Bob Stevens

For the first time since 1969, Jim Morrison returned to California's Hi-Desert. At least in spirit.

In recognition of the 25th anniversary of the Hwy 62 Open Studio Art Tours, *Yucca Brevifolia Magazine* and *JT City Limits*, Lisa Schyck, and Producer Lisa Rae Black designed The Lizard King Immersive, a multimedia event merging the talents of Joshua Tree artists, held at Mojave Gold on February 18th. Featuring regional musicians' renditions of The Doors, selected readings of Jim Morrison's poetry, and original art by Patrick Hasson., many of the Hi-Desert's most talented musicians sonically fueled the evening, including: Los Poncho Tones' Jon Ossman (bass) and Denny Weston (drums), Paul Forrester and Robert Garson (guitar), Bobby Furgo and DJ Gray (piano), and backing vocals by The Blue Ladies. Produced by Lisa Rae Black and organized by Black and JT City Limits Presents, sponsors included Juniper Arts, the Joshua Tree National Park Association and 3M Studios, with 50 percent of ticket proceeds benefiting the continuation of MBCAC's Art Tours.

Jim Morrison wrote, "Real poetry doesn't say anything, it just ticks off all possibilities. Opens all doors. You can walk through any



Bobby Furgo - Photo by Bob Stevens

one that suits you.” It offers lines of escape from the limited ways in which we see and feel. Like many of this region’s creatives, Morrison experienced the desert as poetry, as a catalyst for transforming the most intangible elements of life into their chosen art form.

I, as the narrator of “The Lizard King Immersive,” in collaboration with Lisa Rae Black and Lisa Schyck, could think of no more fitting way to celebrate Open Studio Art Tour’s 25th anniversary than to pay tribute to Hi-Desert artists through a musical gathering grounded in Morrison’s transfiguring ethos.

It’s Time for the Desert Wild

In the canon of American music history, The Doors are thought of as quintessentially LA, a rock quartet

whose members coalesced in mid-60s Venice Beach, played in clubs along the Sunset Strip, and broke bread with Laurel Canyon contemporaries such as Joni Mitchell, Mama Cass Elliot, and Frank Zappa. But Morrison’s profound connection to the desert and the American Southwest is much less explored.

Indians scattered on dawn’s highway bleeding Ghosts crowded the young child’s fragile eggshell mind

Morrison’s belief that he became possessed by the spirit of a shaman in the New Mexico desert as a 4-year-old was, in his words, “the most important moment of my life.” It set the stage for his approach to creativity—relentlessly pushing himself to the edge— and

his mission to heal others through musical ritual. The desert, as well as coyotes, snakes and lizards, are recurring motifs throughout his writing, representing freedom, primal and untamed forces, and spiritual potency. His poetry carries a strong sense of place with “the city” as a location to escape from and “the desert” as a source (albeit a precarious one) of emancipation and enlightenment.

The screaming maggot Group-grope called life It’s time for the desert wild

Morrison further invoked these images and themes in his 1969 film, *HWY: An American Pastoral*, portions of which were shot in Joshua Tree. Many desert scenes from *HWY*, most notably those featuring Morrison driving through Joshua



Brad Parker - Photo by Bob Stevens



DJ Gray & Denny Westin - - Photo by Bob Stevens

Tree National Park in his light blue 1967 Shelby GT500, more recently gained widespread visibility in the 2009 Johnny Depp-narrated documentary *When You're Strange*, which won a Grammy for Best Long Form Video in 2011.

HWY, a film that Morrison described as “more poetic” than carrying a story line in a traditional sense, follows a hitchhiker (played by Morrison) from Tahquitz Canyon in Palm Springs along Highway 74 in Coachella Valley up through the mountain into the High Desert before driving west back to Los Angeles. Like Morrison’s hitchhiker, the film meanders without any apparent goal. In one scene, he dances and sings with young children, while in another he peruses a rack of paperback novels in a gas station. He kneels on the side of the nighttime highway, passing a

divining rod over a map, seemingly seeking guidance on his next movements. He stops to watch an injured coyote lying on the side of the road (a parallel to the fear a young Jim felt when he observed dying Native Americans from his parents’ car).

The Lizard King Immersive

Is everybody in?
The ceremony is about to begin

Lisa Moncure’s silky vocal rendition of “Light My Fire,” accompanied by Bobby Furgo on keys, launched the evening, a placid and dreamlike start belying the acoustic intensity that would shortly follow. Against projected background imagery of The Doors’ front man, Dr. Natasha Beranek initiated the poetry reading, laying the foundation for the gathering’s nar-

rative themes: Jim Morrison’s creative and philosophical worldview, his shamanistic role in rock music ritual, his commitment to personal autonomy at all costs, and his spiritual connection to the desert.

*What are you doing here?
What do you want? Is it music?
We can play music
But you want more
You want something and someone new.*

*You want ecstasy
Desire and dreams ...
Let’s recreate the world
The palace of conception is burning*

Liesl Clouse/Madame Harlequin commanded the room with her thunderous version of “The Changeling”—the opening track of



Sean Wheeler, DJ Gray, Robert Garson - Photo by Bob Stevens



Kevin Boone - Photo by Bob Stevens

The Doors' final album *LA Woman* (1971), which was a stylistic departure, bringing a rather James Brown-esque, funk element to their previously predominately psychedelic catalog. The song is a declaration of Morrison's lone wolf status and his desire to evolve and cast off the shackles of rock stardom, his strident rejection of adhering to any one persona.

Next was "Shaman's Blues" (from *The Soft Parade*, 1969), a waltzy, jazz-rock exploration of Morrison's solitary shamanistic path. Robert Garson's rich vocals carried "My Eyes Have Seen You" (*Strange Days*, 1967), one of The Doors' shortest songs, a frenzied, parlour piano-driven jaunt through Morrison's voyeuristic line of sight as he gazes on a city under television skies from a rooftop in Venice

Beach. What at first pass appears to be a song about obsession and longing from afar is actually Morrison's lyrical snapshot of a topic he explored at length as a UCLA film student: the socio-psychologically pacifying role of cinema.

The Lords appease us with images.

Through art they confuse



Jeff Boaz, Jon Ossman & Paul Forester - Photo by Bob Stevens



us and blind us to our enslavement [...]]

There are no longer 'dancers,' the possessed.

The cleavage of men into actor and spectators is the central fact of our time [...]]

We have been metamorphosed from a mad

body dancing on hillsides, to a pair of eyes

staring in the dark

What did “breaking through” mean to Morrison? It’s a restless search for portals of escape so that we may transcend the limiting social scripts that we’ve been taught by authority figures and social institutions. “Morrison,” Beranek states, “saw Doors’ concerts as a way to spark reflection in his audiences.” As Morrison explained, “It was never really an act, those so-called performances. It was a life-and death thing; an attempt to communicate, to involve many people in a private world of thought.”

Following Bingo Ritchie’s vocals on “Break on Through,” Lisa Moncure and the Blue Ladies launched a woman-led interpretation of “Alabama Song (Whisky Bar),” both of which were originally tracks on The Doors’ eponymous 1967 debut album. Robert Garson returned to the mic for “Love Her Madly,” followed by a piano-only version of the Baroque pop-influenced “Love



Lisa Moncure - Photo by Bob Stevens



Madame Harlequin - Photo by Bob Stevens

Street” (Waiting for the Sun, 1968) performed by DJ Gray. Garson closed out the second set with “The Crystal Ship,” one of The Doors’ most ethereal ballads. Beranek set up the evening’s third act by invoking eerie imagery from one of Morrison’s darker spoken word poems about a murderous desert traveler from An American Prayer (1978).

The hitchhiker stood by the side of the road & leveled his thumb in the calm calculus of reason

Listening to Kevin Bone’s vocals on “Not to Touch the Earth” (originally part of an extended performance piece by The Doors called “Celebration of the Lizard”) was a trippy, sonically surreal ride. A tale about a primal, powerful desert figure who operates outside

of conventional reality, it was the avant-garde jewel of the evening. “Queen of the Hi-Desert” Jesika Von Rabbit was up next with “Waiting for the Sun,” an initially gentle, but increasingly impassioned plea for spiritual rebirth and better times ahead.

Beranek’s final trip to the mic was an entry to the evening’s concluding set: “The End” (performed by charismatic desert rock mainstay and spoken word Svengali, Sean Wheeler) and the atmospheric “Riders on the Storm” (vocals by Brad Parker).

***After 4 yrs. I’m left w/a
mind like a fuzzy hammer [. . .]
The joy of performing has
Ended [. . .]
Which of my cellves
will be remembered
Good-bye America
I loved you***

“Jim spent the final months of his life in Paris, returning to poetry,” Beranek told the crowd. “The last letter he wrote, a postcard to his lawyer, featured a desert scene from Morocco where he and his girlfriend Pamela Courson had just visited. It is fitting,” Beranek reflected, “that the desert was the alpha and omega of Morrison’s life.”

A Strange Kinship

*Car stopped in a clearing,
Ribbon of life, it was nearing.
I saw the boy break out of his skin.
My heart turned over and I crawled in.*

Patti Smith, herself a devotee of California’s Hi-Desert, always felt a creative bond with Doors’ front man Jim Morrison. On Horses’



Penny Ray, DJ Gray, Erin Gurule - Photo by Bob Stevens

“Break It Up” (1975), Smith recounts a dream she had of Morrison as a winged, Prometheus-like figure, fused to a slab of marble and struggling to liberate himself. When the stone dissolves and Morrison flees, she expresses her yearning to achieve a proximity to Morrison, something she could only achieve through encounters with his poetry and performance. On Wave (1979), Smith further explored Morrison’s impact on her work through “Dancing Barefoot.” The song is an ode to the liminal space between male and female power, their love for each other, as well as their mutual love for the Creator.

*She is re-creation
She, intoxicated by Thee
She has the slow sensation that
He is levitating with she*

Smith first saw Morrison perform in 1967. Speaking to her inexplicable affinity with Morrison, she says, “You have to figure – I was just a girl from South Jersey working in a bookstore. . . Of course, I admired [him] . . . Jim Morrison was one of our great poets and unique performers. His work will always endure.” 🐦



Robert Garson & Jesika Von Rabbit -
Photo by Bob Stevens



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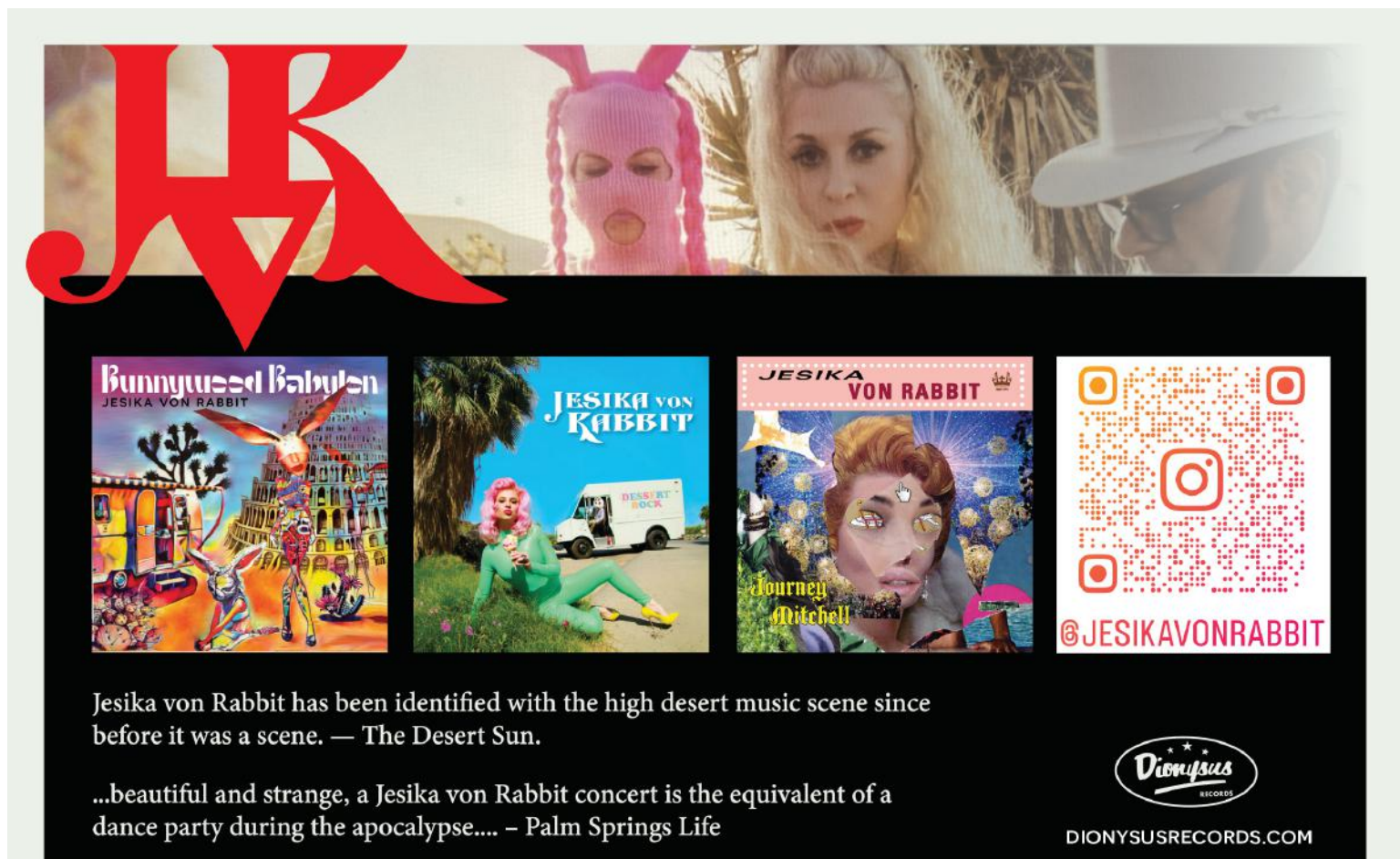
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Jesika von Rabbit has been identified with the high desert music scene since before it was a scene. — The Desert Sun.

...beautiful and strange, a Jesika von Rabbit concert is the equivalent of a dance party during the apocalypse.... – Palm Springs Life

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TARA BEIER

Mourning Doves of Joshua Tree

By Lisa Black



Photo by Jessica Castro

Canadian-Filipino born songstress Tara Beier is a true standout within our prolific, artistic desert community. Born in Vancouver British Columbia, Beier hails from a musical background—her great-grandfather was a pianist in Victoria, and, from an early age, Beier exhibited solid signs of this lineage when she began playing classical piano at age 5. Ten years at the Royal Conservatory of Music ce-

mented this genetic drive and also inspired her to write the Native rights docudrama, *Covered*, in which she portrays legendary singer-songwriter activist Buffy Sainte-Marie. But music will always be Beier's first love.

Her latest single, "Desert Soul" is an extension of her most recent album *Mourning Doves of Joshua Tree*, produced by Steve Stout of Nashville. "From the beginning,

my producer Steve Stout immediately understood my sound and artistic vision," Beier says. "Together, we created something that felt both grounded and expansive that we are both very proud of."

Mourning Doves of Joshua Tree was released in 2025 on Manimal Records, produced by Stout and engineered by Alex Williams at The Village Studios in Los Angeles and Pat Kearns at Goat Mountain

Recording. The release quickly received strong national attention in Rolling Stone, Billboard and Paste Magazine. Immediately following the album's release, the Tara Beier band performed at The Whisky, Pappy & Harriet's, The Troubadour and the Morongo Valley Music Festival. Mourning Doves of Joshua Tree was also placed on the Grammy ballot for Best Americana album 2025.

"As a Filipino-American artist, I'm honored to be among the first Asian American voices represented in this category," Beier says. "That representation means so much to me. I'm deeply thankful for the love and support it has brought." The album was also well received by The Recording Academy voting members as a "stand-out and reputable independent release."

"Each song," Beier explains, "seems to resonate deeply with listeners, affirming its impact and authenticity." "The Desert Soul (Remix)" was released in February 2026 and came about through a reunification with Steve Stout that ended shaping the song into a modern, New Age track with an electronic feel that invites movement, dance, and a renewed sense of play while honoring the spirit of the original mix. Currently, she is collaborating on her new song, "No More War (Flower to the Gun)."

Beier describes her relationship with the desert as "deeply personal and profoundly healing." She purchased a home in Landers nine years ago that has since become her sanctuary and place of peace—a refuge away from the intensity of Los Angeles.

"There's something about the silence of the desert that is immediately transformative. The stillness, the vastness, the sense of being on

another planet creates a space where I could truly hear myself and begin to heal," she says. After the birth of her twin boys and following the passing of her grandmother, she and her family lived in the desert for close to a year. "During that time, my twins were two years old. I was navigating postpartum while processing deep grief."

Beier explains that living in the desert through all the seasons has allowed her "to connect deeply with the elements—the air, the land, and the rhythm of nature."

The environment supported my healing physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The clean air, the quiet, and the simplicity of daily life has helped restore my body and calm my mind." And that's when and where she found herself writing Mourning Doves of Joshua Tree. "Every song emerged directly from my experience of living in the desert."

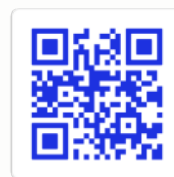
The album is filled with metaphors and imagery drawn from the landscape, its beauty, its solitude, and raw honesty. Beier describes how she felt the inner pulse of the desert coming through in her music.

"It was as if the land itself had a voice that guided my writing. The desert helped me process grief; it strengthened me and brought me closer to a deeper sense of spirituality. There is something about the way the earth, sky, and silence converge there that opens a doorway—to reflection, to healing, and to a stronger connection with God and the unseen. The desert didn't just inspire the album, it shaped it. The desert remains a sacred place for me, one that I hope will continue to offer beauty, grounding, and inspiration for generations to come."



Photo by Jessica Castro

To sum up Beier's relationship with the desert, she quotes Ameen Rihani: "In the desert, you become a discoverer. You discover your soul, which had been submerged in vain pursuits, which had been lost in the coils and toils of modern life. You discover your kinship with nature and man, which is evoked by the naturalness and the gentle humanity of the natives of the desert, and you will also discover God."



website



music



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with Cindy Talley, RN

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Cindy specializes in non-surgical aesthetic treatments including injectables, wrinkle relaxers, fillers, threads, skin rejuvenation therapies, and advanced wellness services tailored to each individual's goals. Her expertise also extends into IV hydration therapy, vitamin injections, peptide support, and medically guided weight loss programs utilizing GLP-1 treatments and shockwave therapies.

What truly sets Cindy apart is her deeply personal approach. Clients consistently describe her as compassionate, knowledgeable, gentle, and attentive, someone who listens carefully and creates customized treatment plans that enhance natural beauty without compromising authenticity.

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INSIDE THE DESERT SOUND

3M Studios Palm Desert

By Crystal Harrell



Photo Courtesy of 3M Studios



3M STUDIOS

3M Studios Palm Desert is becoming one of the desert's most dynamic creative hubs. Co-founded by lifelong musician and certified audio engineer Mark Gregg alongside Mandy Calvano and Misty Howell, the studio represents both a new chapter and a natural evolution of a decades-long career in music.

Gregg has been a guitarist and vocalist since boyhood, making his living as a professional musician by his early 20s. After moving to the desert in 1994 with his band Dude Jones, he spent more than 35 years performing locally and building a loyal following. Five years ago, he made a conscious decision to step back from full-time gigging and instead invest in something lasting: a state-of-the-art recording and production studio. It took nearly two years to build. Today, 3M Studios has been open for three years and is steadily growing toward profitability under a five-year business plan.

Originally envisioned as a rehearsal and music recording space, the studio quickly adapted to meet a different demand. "It became clear that the music scene here wasn't developed enough to keep us as busy as we're able to be," Gregg

explains. Instead, 3M Studios found its stride in video production, commercial work, and podcasting—services that are now booked nearly every day.

“It feels so important to be able to share someone’s message with the world through the technology we use in the studio. Technology is always changing and bringing a new perspective to stories we can tell,” shared 3M Studios engineer and videographer Dominick Calvano, who is also a musician and has worked with the local organization Shelter from the Storm on the song “Run Baby Run” for domestic violence awareness.

The studio works with local creators as well as national productions, including viral content creators The Old Gays, whose combined social media views and the

Silver Linings podcast through Heart Radio reach into the billions. Through industry-standard platforms like Source-Connect and Riverside, 3M Studios seamlessly records with producers in Los Angeles, New York, and beyond, making geography far less limiting than it once was.

Gregg’s technical expertise plays a central role in that success. Trained through Berklee College of Music and certified in Logic Pro, he returned to formal study to ensure he could collaborate at a professional level with engineers across the country. The studio continues to embrace emerging tools, including artificial intelligence for editing and content creation. Gregg views AI as a transformative force in audio and video production, one that can streamline workflows, reduce

costs, and empower musicians and content creators to maintain a consistent, professional presence online.

Beyond its technical capabilities, 3M Studios is intentionally designed as a welcoming, creative environment. Gregg and his partners, entrepreneurs who also operate a successful healthcare business, share a commitment to professionalism and community engagement, including educational programs for local youth.

“From the minute I stepped foot here, the people embraced what I did,” Gregg says. With 3M Studios Palm Desert, he’s returning that support—offering a space where local talent and global production meet, and where desert creativity

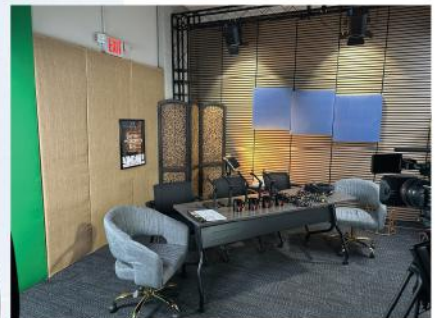
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WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ROOTED IN WELLNESS, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY IN THE MOJAVE DESERT

Leading From the Heart

By Lisa Schyck



Sabrina and Tobi are sisters-in-law, longtime business partners, and women entrepreneurs whose work has helped shape Yucca Valley's growing wellness community. Together, they co-own Cedar & Sage Wellness Studio and The Desert Mystic Collective, while Tobi and her husband Randy also own The Yucca Tree Eatery. Across yoga, healing, retail, food, and community gathering, their businesses

reflect a shared devotion to service, connection, and the transformative spirit of the Mojave Desert.

Lisa: What first drew you to the desert, and what made you stay?

Sabrina: My husband Steve's work as a firefighter first brought us to the desert. We eventually found our way to Yucca Valley because it was more affordable and closer to family. At first, I didn't see the beauty here, but over time the desert be-

came home. We raised our two boys here, built friendships, and created a life I can't imagine leaving.

Tobi: I moved to Yucca Valley 23 years ago for work and to raise my children. What made me stay was the community, the connection to nature, and the sense that this land was calling me to grow, create, and keep expanding.

Lisa: *How has the desert shaped your healing journeys and your businesses?*

Sabrina: The desert opened doors I can't fully explain. Motherhood, family, and community have shaped me deeply. Opening Cedar & Sage in 2017 was one of the greatest gifts of service I could offer this community.

Tobi: The desert transformed me. I came here as one version of myself and became another. It stretched me, refined me, and helped me grow into a woman, grandmother, entrepreneur, and community builder.

Lisa: *What do your businesses offer?*

Tobi & Sabrina: Cedar & Sage Wellness Studio offers yoga, sculpt, breath work, sound healing, meditation, and wellness classes in a sanctuary-like space. The Yucca Tree Eatery serves organic, nourishing food with gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan, smoothie, juice, and wholesome menu options. The Desert Mystic Collective is a curated crystal and artisan shop featuring local makers, jewelry, gifts, and desert-inspired treasures.



Lisa: *What inspired you to become entrepreneurs?*

Sabrina: I never set out thinking, "I'm an entrepreneur." I became a yoga teacher and dreamed of creating a space for healing. It felt like we manifested each business when the time was right.

Tobi: Entrepreneurship has been a calling. My husband and I often ask, "What would you do for free?" Following that answer has guided us. I believe abundance follows passion.

Lisa: *What challenges do small businesses face in the Mojave?*

Sabrina & Tobi: The slow summer months are difficult, especially for businesses connected with tourism. Their answer has been to build strong relationships with locals, stay true to their values, and create spaces that serve residents and visitors alike.

Lisa: *How do you define healing?*

Sabrina: Healing comes from a higher source. We are vessels. Yoga is a path of self-liberation, inner freedom, and service.

Tobi: Healing is remembering who you truly are reconnecting with God, consciousness, unity, and the truth that what we seek often already lives within us.

Lisa: *What advice would you give women starting a business here?*

Tobi & Sabrina: Look for what is missing. Offer something authentic. Respect the community. Don't step on toes. And be ready, the desert can be tough, but the women here are strong, determined, and deeply resilient.



Tobi and Sabrina's hope for the high desert community is to keep growing with intention, offering meaningful experiences, heartfelt service, and spaces where people feel welcomed, nourished, inspired, and connected.

Through Cedar & Sage Wellness Studio, The Yucca Tree Eatery, and The Desert Mystic Collective, Sabrina and Tobi have created more than businesses. They have built gathering places rooted in love, healing, nourishment, creativity, and service a reflection of the Mojave itself: resilient, expansive, soulful, and alive with possibility.



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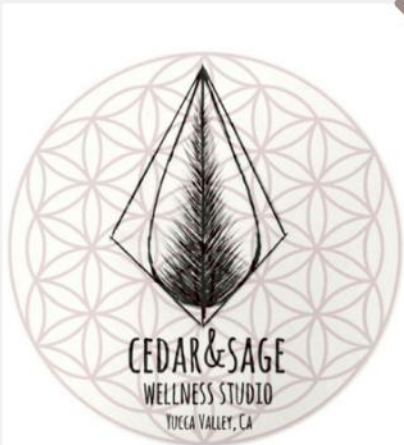
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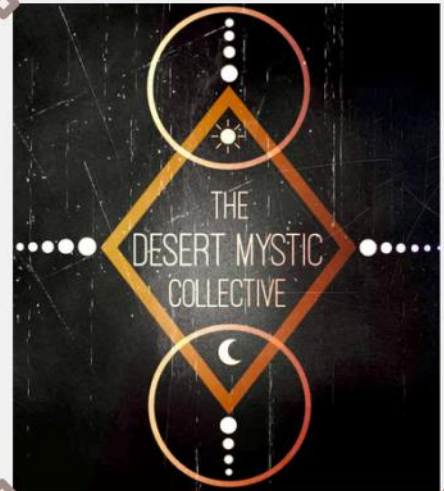
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Rooted in Community

Born and raised in Panama, surrounded by a culture rich in family traditions, community gatherings, and shared experiences. These early experiences became the foundation for her understanding of connection and continue to influence both her artistic and healing work today.

In a world that often rewards speed, productivity, and constant stimulation, Yani DeSousa's work offers a different invitation—one that encourages stillness, presence, and meaningful connection.

Artist, photographer, healthcare professional, yoga practitioner, and sound healer, DeSousa has spent years exploring the intersection of creativity, wellness, and human connection. Her journey, which began in Panama and eventually led her to the California desert, has shaped a practice rooted in compassion, mindfulness, and the belief that healing happens through relationship.

*"Healing happens
in relationship.
With family, friends,
nature, and community.
We aren't meant to
navigate life alone."*

Her parents played an important role in shaping her perspective. Her mother, a pediatric nurse, modeled compassion, service, and care for others. Her father, a Portuguese fisherman who traveled extensively, returned home with stories and photographs from around the world. Through his adventures, DeSousa developed a curiosity about people, cultures, and the universal desire for belonging.

Among her earliest memories are moments spent outdoors listening to ocean waves, rainfall, birdsong, and the sounds of nature. At night, she would stare into the stars, captivated by their beauty and mystery. Those experiences nurtured both her creativity and spirituality, while teaching her the importance of listening deeply.

Today, those same lessons continue to guide her work. Through sound healing, DeSousa creates immersive experiences using Tibetan singing bowls, tuning forks, drums, chimes, and rain sticks designed to encourage relaxation, restoration, and inner balance. Drawing upon her years in healthcare and wellness, she understands how profoundly the nervous system responds to safety, stillness, and presence.

Photography has become another powerful avenue for exploration and expression. Initially inspired by the photographs her father brought home from his travels, her work evolved into an exploration of memory, identity, home, impermanence, and transformation. Through her lens, ordinary objects and spaces become reflections of the emotional stories we carry throughout our lives.



Through her lens, ordinary places become reflections of memory, resilience, and transformation.

Today, DeSousa finds inspiration in the California desert. Its vast landscapes, quiet beauty, and resilient spirit mirror many of the themes she explores through both art and healing. The desert has taught her patience, trust, and the understanding that growth often occurs beneath the surface before it becomes visible.

Whether she is creating art, guiding a sound bath, teaching yoga, or holding space for others, Yani DeSousa's intention remains the same: to foster connection. Through creativity, mindfulness, and presence, she invites others to slow down, reconnect with themselves, and remember that healing begins when we feel seen, supported, and connected to something greater than ourselves.

Because ultimately, home is not simply a place—it is a feeling of belonging we cultivate within ourselves and with one another.



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DESERTWAVEHEALINGARTS.COM

ROOTED IN THE DESERT

A Life Devoted to Plant Medicine

By Sailene Ossman



Courtesy of Sailene Ossman

My path into plant medicine didn't begin as a business plan. It began in a hospital room.

At 19, after a near-fatal car accident left me on life support, I was introduced to cannabis in a way I had never understood before. A respiratory therapist explained that the treatment expanding my lungs worked similarly to how cannabis functions as a bronchial dilator. At that moment, something clicked. This wasn't rebellion. It wasn't culture. It was medicine.

My recovery was long, and I chose to lean into plant-based support as the foundation of my healing. What started as personal necessity turned into deep study. I wanted to understand why it worked, how it worked, and how to speak about it responsibly.

That curiosity eventually brought me to Los Angeles during the early days of medical marijuana. I went on to launch one of the first medical delivery services in Venice Beach, driving across LA with my "angel ladies," helping patients access relief at a time when the system was still finding its footing. Those were grassroots days.

Education happened face to face. Trust was built one conversation at a time.

When California shifted into the regulated adult-use market in 2016, the landscape changed dramatically. The industry became bigger, louder, and more commercially driven. After two decades in the space, I pivoted. My focus expanded beyond THC and into hemp, broad-spectrum cannabinoids, and a wider spectrum of plant medicine that included adaptogens, mushrooms, and traditional herbal allies.

That evolution led me to Joshua Tree, where I opened Brewja Elixir.

The desert offered something LA couldn't. Space. Slowness. Real community. Here, the work feels more personal. Brewja Elixir isn't about trend cycles or chasing the next product drop. It has become a local resource for people curious about plant medicine and how to integrate it thoughtfully into their lives.

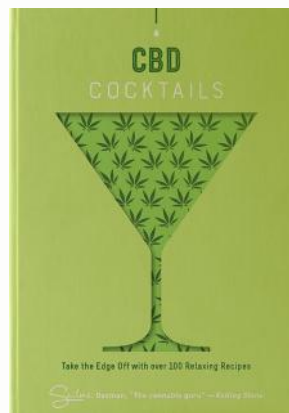
In a place like Joshua Tree, people arrive seeking change. Some are navigating stress. Some are exploring creativity. Some are simply ready to feel better in their bodies. What I offer is education first. How cannabinoids interact with the endocannabinoid system. How adaptogens support stress response. How plants can complement, not replace, the body's own intelligence.

Living in the Hi-Desert has deepened my belief in adaptation. Plants here survive extreme conditions through balance and

resilience. That philosophy mirrors how I approach plant medicine. It's not about extremes. It's about support.

In the issues ahead, I'll be sharing deeper dives into specific topics, offering practical, grounded education you can apply in everyday life. Next up, we'll begin with Cannabinoids 101, a foundational look at what they are, how they work, and why understanding them changes the entire conversation.

This work has evolved over decades, from hospital rooms to LA streets to the quiet beauty of the desert. I'm grateful to continue it here. 🐦



CBD Cocktails by Sailene Ossman is a vibrant mixology guide featuring 100+ cocktail and mocktail recipes infused with CBD. It blends easy drink recipes with helpful education on CBD's uses and calming wellness benefits, making it ideal for both beginners and modern hosts.



cocktails

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Robert Warner
1969

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★ GUESS WHO'S In My Pants? ★

JUST TO NAME A FEW:

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ELVIS PRESLEY • STEVIE WONDER • IGGY POP
KEITH RICHARDS • BEYONCÉ

For over fifty years, leather artist Robert Warner has been creating wearable works of art for some of the world's most recognizable musicians, performers, and creative spirits. His handcrafted designs have crossed generations, trends, and cultural movements while remaining rooted in one simple philosophy: **make something original.**

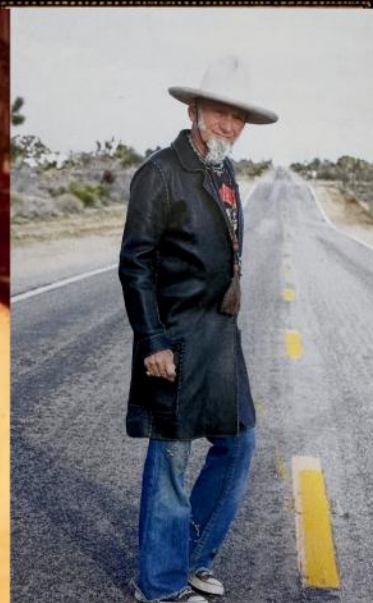
From the vibrant streets of Los Angeles' Pico-Robertson neighborhood to the wide-open landscapes of Joshua Tree, Warner's journey has been guided by creativity, craftsmanship, and a deep respect for individuality. Long before custom fashion became mainstream, he was handcrafting one-of-a-kind leather garments that allowed people to express who they were without saying a word.

Today, his Joshua Tree studio serves as both workshop and creative sanctuary. Surrounded by desert beauty and inspired by the independent spirit of the High Desert, Warner continues to design custom jackets, pants, vests, bags, and collectible pieces that blur the line between fashion and fine art.

Each creation is handcrafted from start to finish and reflects Warner's unmistakable style—part rock-and-roll, part Western, part rebel, and entirely authentic. Rich textures, hand-painted details, vintage influences, and meticulous craftsmanship transform every piece into a personal statement.

What makes Robert Warner's work special isn't simply the famous names who have worn it. It's the belief that every client deserves something as unique as they are. Whether designing for a music legend or a first-time collector, Warner approaches every piece with the same passion and attention to detail.

More than five decades after he began working with leather, Robert Warner continues to prove that true craftsmanship never goes out of style.



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ROBERT WARNER LEATHER

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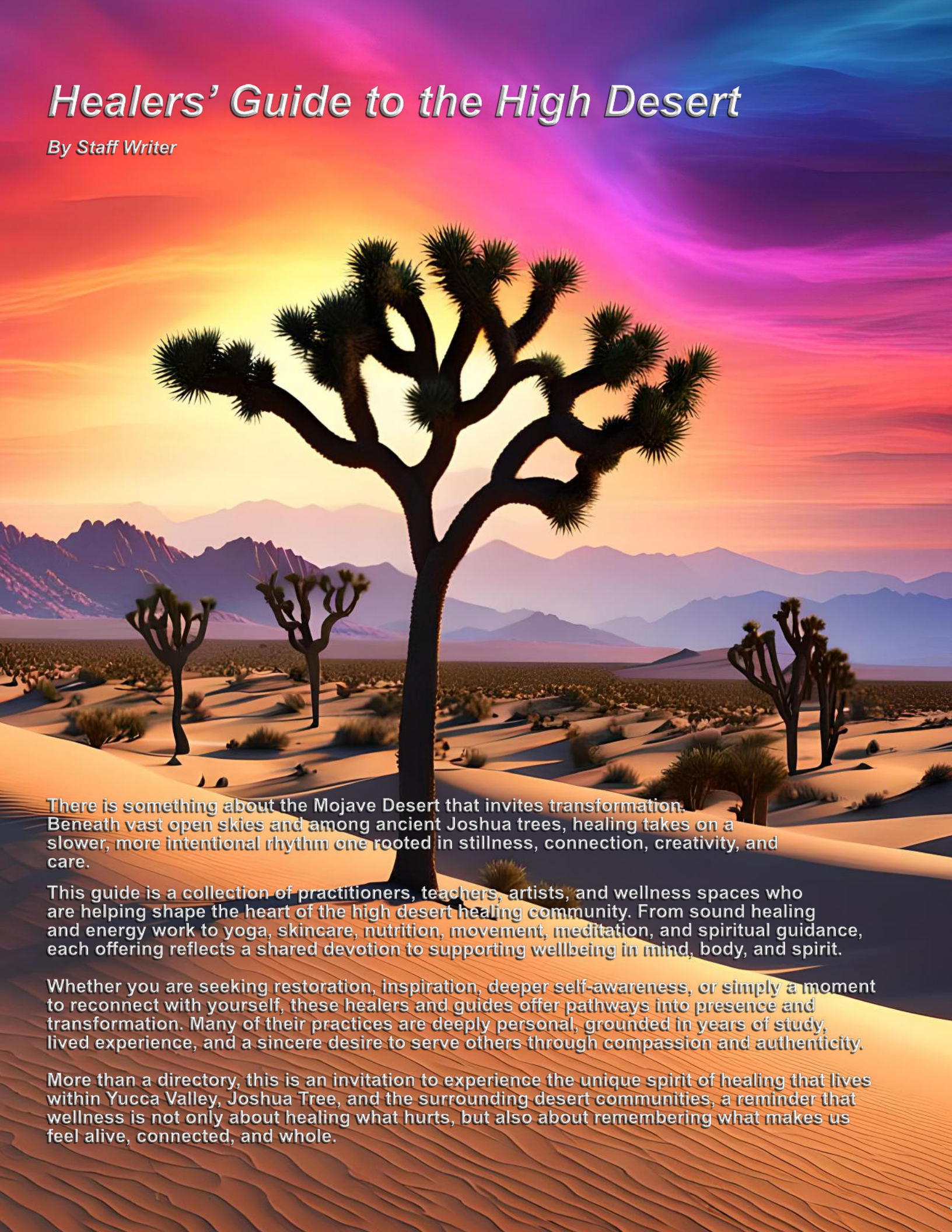
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Healers' Guide to the High Desert

By Staff Writer



There is something about the Mojave Desert that invites transformation. Beneath vast open skies and among ancient Joshua trees, healing takes on a slower, more intentional rhythm one rooted in stillness, connection, creativity, and care.

This guide is a collection of practitioners, teachers, artists, and wellness spaces who are helping shape the heart of the high desert healing community. From sound healing and energy work to yoga, skincare, nutrition, movement, meditation, and spiritual guidance, each offering reflects a shared devotion to supporting wellbeing in mind, body, and spirit.

Whether you are seeking restoration, inspiration, deeper self-awareness, or simply a moment to reconnect with yourself, these healers and guides offer pathways into presence and transformation. Many of their practices are deeply personal, grounded in years of study, lived experience, and a sincere desire to serve others through compassion and authenticity.

More than a directory, this is an invitation to experience the unique spirit of healing that lives within Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree, and the surrounding desert communities, a reminder that wellness is not only about healing what hurts, but also about remembering what makes us feel alive, connected, and whole.



Abigail Kochunas

SACRED HEALING ART



Abigail of Sacred Healing Art offers trauma-informed, integrative healing for individuals, couples, groups and your fur family in the comfort and privacy of your own space.

She specializes in Energy Work & Shamanic Sound Healing. Sessions incorporate Crystal Reiki, aromatherapy, drumming, live vocals, and other instruments to bring you into deep states of relaxation. Clear energetic blocks, release stuck emotions, restore the body's biorhythms, and bring balance and vitality back into sync. Custom-curated experiences and retreats are also available. For pet healing, she offers Pet Reiki + Animal Communication and My Pet & Me Reiki sessions.

Abigail is an Usui Reiki Master, artist, animal communicator, and published author. She has facilitated wellness experiences for Forbes top-rated companies and has worked remotely with hundreds of clients worldwide. She is certified in Core Wound Healing and is a Seek Safely signatory.

Visit: sacredhealingartla.com to schedule.

Readers of Yucca Brevifolia Magazine will receive **10% off** with code **YUCCA26**.



Hester Van Hooven Ward



Hester offers transformational healing, multidimensional embodiment mentorship, and intuitive support for individuals seeking deeper connection, clarity, empowerment, and alignment on their healing journey. Her work weaves together energy healing, subconscious re-patterning, somatic awareness, spiritual guidance, and grounded integration to support clients through transformative life transitions, trauma recovery, and awakening experiences.

Offerings include one-on-one sessions, embodiment mentorship, women's circles, intuitive guidance, and energy healing designed to help clients reconnect with their authentic selves, remember their inner wisdom, deepen their connection with spirit guides, and embody their personal power. Hester is a Reiki Master, certified subconscious freedom coach, shamanic Reiki practitioner, Initiate of the Goddess Archetypal Lineage, Indigenous advocate, and advocate for women healing from sexual trauma.

She is also the founder of Adaptive Resilience Consulting, which supports nervous system resilience, subconscious identity alignment, and sustainable well being for professionals, creatives, leaders, and organizations.

Visit: hestervanhoovenward.com



Janice Taitel, MD

Dr. Janice Taitel Aikido-Based Wellness & Trauma Recovery Workshops. She combines the principles of Aikido, mindfulness, and somatic awareness to help individuals cultivate resilience, presence, and emotional well-being.

Aikido, known as "*The Way of Harmony*," is a Japanese martial art rooted in balance, non-resistance, and peaceful strength. While Dr. Taitel teaches Aikido, her workshops focus on applying its principles to everyday life. Through gentle, body-based practices, participants learn how stress and trauma affect the nervous system and discover practical tools for creating greater calm, confidence, and connection.

Her monthly **Power of Love Workshops** at The Beatnik explore themes such as compassion, boundaries, resilience, and authentic connection through Aikido principles and simple somatic exercises.

Dr. Taitel also offers **B.E.A.T. (Being Empowered After Trauma)**, a workshop designed for individuals navigating PTSD and other trauma-related challenges. Participants learn mindfulness-based tools to remain grounded, respond to triggers with greater awareness, and move forward with strength and compassion.

Visit: AikiAccess.org



**Leah Estella
Abdenour**



Leah's mission and creativity are deeply inspired by supporting the creative expression of others. Leah is the owner of Brewja, a shop in Joshua Tree that specializes in plant medicine, herbs, and mystical gifts. She is also an experience creator and the founder of Mighty Muse Experiences, LLC, offering public, private, and corporate wellness experiences.

Leah weaves hints of magic through crafts, creation, and ceremony. She produces retreats, cacao ceremonies, rituals, spells, sound baths, meditations, and workshops designed to ignite the spark of creativity in others, reminding them of their own inner magic and power.

She also creates magical crafts such as ceremonial cacao mousse, smudge wands, salves, body oils, and bath soaks, all available at Brewja.

Leah is here to connect others through the lens of play an incredibly effective path to wellness.

Visit: BrewjaElixir.com and Mighty-Muse.com



Megan Hutch



New and returning clients both often say, "the best facial I've ever had" after seeing Megan. Her skincare studio is filled with color and life, where birdsong follows you from room to room. Botanical aromas and lush greenery create a sensory experience, while you're welcomed with genuine warmth and care, an essential part of her approach as an esthetician.

The Pointed Pearl offers an artisanal spa experience in the heart of Old Town Yucca Valley. Drawing from her background as a chef, musician, and creative, Megan crafts one-of-a-kind treatments that deliver immediate results while supporting long-term skin health.

With over a decade of advanced skincare knowledge, she translates complex concepts into practical, easy-to-understand guidance. Month after month, she builds real, lasting relationships with her clients rooted in trust, education, and results always focused on helping you achieve "the best skin you've ever been in."

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Visit: thepointedpearl.com



Morgan Hancock



Welcome to Cactus & Oak Spa, where each treatment is an invitation to return to your natural state of balance.

Founded by esthetician Morgan Hancock, this high desert sanctuary offers more than skincare, it offers space to slow down, soften, and reconnect with yourself.

Every facial is a deeply intentional experience, where nurturing touch and calming energy guide the body out of stress and into restoration. As the nervous system unwinds, the skin responds, revealing a healthy, radiant glow that reflects inner harmony.

Rooted in the grounding energy of the desert, Cactus & Oak Spa honors the connection between body, mind, and spirit. This is a place where healing unfolds gently, where stillness is sacred, and where beauty is not forced, but remembered.

Visit: cactusandoakspa.com



Petra Cimbalova



Petra is an avid crystal bowl player and multi-instrumentalist at The Sound Mind Garden, offering both private and small-group meditative soundscape sessions, as well as larger event entertainment performances. Petra loves meeting people and considers every client visit an opportunity to learn and connect more deeply to life. Through her work, she shares a message of accessing inner awareness through stillness and the body's own natural chemistry.

She welcomes solo sessions, baby moons, engagements and weddings, grief processing, families with children, yoga retreats, birthdays, anniversaries, bachelor and bachelorette celebrations, corporate retreats, simple getaways, and more. Sessions take place at your Airbnb or private residence.

"Petra doesn't just facilitate a sound session, she creates an atmosphere where real transformation can happen. Her energy is positive, expansive, and deeply healing. She guides with such grace and authenticity that you feel supported every step of the way. I cannot recommend her enough to anyone seeking a meaningful, heart-opening experience. It was an absolute gift." - **Ericalynn**

Visit: thesoundmindgarden.com



Sabrina Bennett



Sabrina always held a deep connection to health, wellness, nature, and mindful living. Growing up in the mountains, she developed a love for movement, fitness, and nourishing the body through a clean, whole-foods lifestyle. When yoga entered her life in 2008, the practice immediately aligned with the way she already lived and viewed the world.

After completing her yoga teacher training in 2012, Sabrina blended her love of Ashtanga, Hatha, and Vinyasa Flow into a practice that encourages strength, balance, grace, mindfulness, and connection between body and mind. In 2017, opening Cedar & Sage Wellness Studio became a dream realized and a way to serve the high desert community through wellness and healing.

Sabrina's teachings are rooted in honoring the sacred philosophy and lifestyle of yoga while encouraging authentic connection, presence, community, and living the practice both on and off the mat.

Visit: cedarandsagewellnessstudio.com



Sarah Barlow



Sarah is the owner of her wellness brand, Stardust Super foods and Juice, which promotes nutrition, gut healing, anti-inflammatory foods, and a lifestyle inspired by the ancient philosophies of Ayurveda, Chinese Medicine, and Food Therapy.

Having trained in Ashtanga Yoga in Mysore, India, as well as Hatha Yoga, Sound Healing, and Reiki, Sarah has practiced in Portland, Tucson, and Austin. She has also designed menus for brands such as Whole Foods, Portland Juice Co., and Bliss Café. Now called to the desert, Sarah brings her nutrition background and wellness offerings from Stardust to the West Coast. She offers one-on-one yoga sessions, nutritional consultations, group classes, workshops, and Stardust events throughout the Joshua Tree and Los Angeles areas. Lifestyle merchandise and additional Stardust products will also be available on the website, along with a weekly juice subscription for local pickup beginning this summer.

Check out Sarah's expanding Stardust brand and sign up online to learn more about her lifestyle products, juice subscriptions, nutritional consultation (Certified NT), yoga (500YT), wellness events & workshops.

Visit: stardustsuperfoodsandjuice.com



Taryn Weitzman

UNTAMED
INSIGHTS

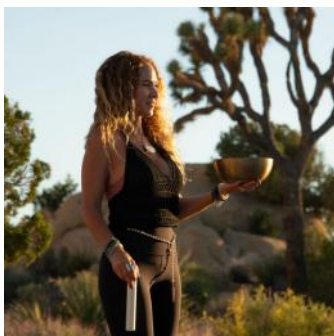
Step into a deeper relationship with yourself. Taryn has a rare ability to perceive a person's truest essence and express the depth of their soul with clarity and care. Through Untamed Insights®, she offers an intuitive healing arts practice devoted to guiding individuals through life's most meaningful transitions.

Blending self-actualization coaching, energy-based modalities, and intuitive perception, her work supports deep emotional release, insight, and transformation.

With a specialty in grief and end-of-life preparation and support, Taryn holds compassionate space for both the human and spiritual dimensions of loss, helping clients move through it with presence, reverence, and peace. She also offers portrait photography sessions designed to capture the soul, preserving who you are in a single moment of truth.

Taryn is the creator of the Untamed Transformation Oracle Deck. Her work bridges intuition and grounded guidance inviting you to reconnect with your inner knowing and live with greater authenticity, depth and freedom.

Visit: untamedinsights.com



Tobi Rae



Tobi is a mother, wife, grandmother, entrepreneur, meditation guide, and healing practitioner whose work is rooted in faith, compassion, connection, and service. Originally from Crestline, she has lived in Yucca Valley for over 23 years, where she raised her family and built businesses devoted to healing, community, and meaningful experiences within the Mojave Desert.

With a background in Christian ministry and more than 17 years devoted to yoga and spiritual exploration, Tobi's offerings blend yoga, sound healing, meditation, breath work, prayer, and energy healing to support

restoration, inner connection, and personal transformation. Her path is deeply inspired by Bhakti Yoga, the yoga of devotion and the belief that healing is a return to alignment with God, love, and one's true self.

Together with her sister-in-law, Sabrina Bennett, Tobi co-owns Cedar & Sage Wellness Studio and Desert Mystic Collective. She also co-owns The Yucca Tree Eatery with her husband, Randy.

Visit: Cedarandsagewellnessstudio.com



Walter Winfield

Walter's class belongs to a new category of exercise called Meditative Movement, a practice that includes biological, social, and psychological aspects of health.

Each Sunday at 9:30 AM, in the heart of Old Town Yucca Valley, a group of high desert dwellers gathers among piñon pines and Joshua trees to practice the ancient martial art of Khi Cong Vi-Ki with Walter. For more than 12 years, Walter has opened his home to the community for weekly free Khi Cong Vi-Ki classes, as well as offerings at the Joshua Tree Music Festival.

His classes combine movement, breathing, and awareness, and can be practiced anywhere, anytime sitting, standing, moving, still, or lying down. Khi Cong is excellent for stress reduction, psycho-spiritual growth, and overall well-being.

A true gem of healing in the high desert, The Khi Cong Center of Yucca Valley is a welcoming space where beginners are always encouraged to join.

Text [1-949-295-2876](tel:1-949-295-2876)



Chase Buttice



Medicine Owl Wellness Studio owner Chase Buttice is a Spiritual Therapist, Astrologer, and Priestess of the high desert whose work is devoted to the rise of yin energetic, intuition, and human sovereignty in the Age of Aquarius. Born at 11:11, she views this symbolic time code as deeply connected to awakening and collective transformation.

She is the owner of Medicine Owl Wellness Studio in Joshua Tree, where she offers integrative healing, light therapy, spiritual coaching, and astrological counseling. Her work focuses on shadow work, rewinding, energetic boundaries, Source connection, embodied astrology, and the activation of ancient intuitive and psychic technologies within the human system. Chase serves as the resident astrologer at We Care Spa and is the founder of "The High Desert Mystics" at the Joshua Tree Retreat Center.

Her mission is to help others reconnect to Source, reclaim their wildness and authenticity, activate deeper states of awareness, and embody authentic sovereignty during this pivotal new era of human awakening.

Visit: chasebuttice.com



Jessica Le



Jessica is a yoga teacher, sound facilitator, and community builder who creates intentional spaces for reflection, connection, and personal growth. A dedicated practitioner for over 26 years, she has studied with a range of teachers and modalities, cultivating a rich and intuitive approach to her work. Jessica completed her yoga teacher training in 2012, with roots in the Bhakti Yoga tradition—an approach centered on devotion, presence, and connection.

Through a blend of mindful movement, meditation, breath work, and sound healing, her sessions invite participants to slow down, tune into their inner wisdom, and gain clarity on what truly matters. Jessica's heart-centered approach is both grounding and inspiring, helping people reconnect with themselves and move through life with greater intention and alignment.

She has been a resident of the desert and an active member of the high desert community for the past five years, and founded Earth Yoga & Spa in 2024. Follow her on Instagram @jessicamai.yoga to explore her community offerings and connect directly for private individual or group sessions.

Email: Jessica.mai.le@gmail.com



Prema Saraswati



Trauma Healer, Hypnotherapist, Spiritual Healer, Speaker. Have you experienced childhood abuse, trauma, stress, or anxiety?

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For more than 14 years, she has guided clients through powerful healing and personal transformation. A survivor of the Communist genocide in Laos during the 1970s, Prema understands the journey of healing firsthand. She healed — and now helps others do the same.

Coming from a long lineage of shamanic and herbal healers, Prema combines professional expertise, spiritual wisdom, and deep compassion to help clients reconnect with their inner strength, peace, and wholeness.

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WATCH URANUS!

The “Ice Giant” along with Pluto and Jupiter usher in a season of recalibration and rebirth

By Joy Corradetti

August 2026 to February 2027 ushers in a collective turning point: breakthroughs after long periods of effort, unexpected opportunities sparked by Pluto and Uranus shake-ups, and a renewed sense of purpose as old limitations fall away. Relationships, career paths, and personal identities undergo meaningful refinement, while Jupiter’s influence brings pockets of luck, clarity, and expansion across the zodiac. It’s a season of recalibration and rebirth—where every sign is invited to step into a more authentic, energized version of itself.

ARIES: There’s been a huge push to achieve long-term goals with Saturn in your sign. Mars, your ruler, has no retrogrades this whole year with full speed ahead! Despite limitations and annoying responsibilities, success is blossoming. Travel plans are thwarted with the exception of business trips. Jupiter in your Solar 5th House brings good fortune with children. By year’s end, it is all about fun and entertainment after months of hard work and struggle.

TAURUS: Love is on the agenda for the Bull! Venus, your ruler, makes beautiful music with the outer planets in August and September. The New Moon on September 10th is favorable in strengthening romance. Your mental and physical health is radiant. October gets a little testy, so plan accordingly. Uranus is transiting your 2nd House causing finances to be fickle for some time to come. Best to balance these energies in an unbalanced environment.

GEMINI: Feeling super restless? It’s all about major transformation as Uranus is glued to your Sun. Rebirth and freedom are your compass. You’re moving to a higher octave of yourself. Additionally, your 3rd House is energized forcing you to communicate. If you ever wanted to write or publish, the time is NOW. Travel accentuated both long distance and short.

CANCER: If money is the focus, the Moon Child is the envy of the zodiac. Cancer’s 2nd House is blessed with benevolent Jupiter residing there for a whole year! The angle of Uranus adds a supplementary boost from unexpected, out-of-the-blue resources. If that isn’t enough, Saturn and Jupiter are dancing to a lovely trine rewarding and recognizing hard work and long-term projects.

LEO: As we begin with a Solar Eclipse in Leo, memories from early childhood and past relationships may force self-reevaluation. What exactly brought you to this junction you are now experiencing? Mercury and Uranus aiding in uncovering psychological blocks, liberating you from illusion and fantasy. A weight has been lifted and clarity shines through. Friends and peers acknowledge your resilient metamorphosis.

VIRGO: If you wished for a new job or employment, you’re in luck! Mars and Uranus in your Solar 10th are revving up their engines for career potential. Intuition is super strong and your empathy amplified. Music becomes your healing oasis as your 12th House is gently resonating. Mercury, your ruler, retrogrades in October until mid-November. Making peace with siblings is a top priority.



LIBRA: Your love life is going to be a roller coaster ride. It's inspiring, exciting and romantic, but speed bumps, too. Balance is definitely your specialty; hence, the Libra scales. Long distance travel is a real possibility. New friendships are easily formed, and perhaps a life-long one. Wishes and goals manifest on your doorstep. Venus, your ruler, will go retrograde in October and November.

SCORPIO: Recognition and promotion highlight your 10th house thanks to brilliant transits from the Sun, Jupiter and Mercury. Your Scorpion determination triggers success. Pluto, your ruler, is all about transformation and is retrograde nestled in the 4th House. Mid-October brings opportunity for change of residence, a remodel or redecoration. Your body also revamped with Venus frolicking in Scorpio including improved diet, exercise, a makeover and maybe even beauty enhancements.

SAGITTARIUS: You have hit the Jackpot, Sag, with Jupiter, your ruler, at the top of your cart! Success for travel and career goals are amplified with boundless energy. Mars trines the Sun promoting dynamic zest for life and contagious enthusiasm. Opportunities are available for excelling in sports and athleticism. Your sense of humor and positive attitude is at an all-time high.

CAPRICORN: Saturn, your ruler, is retrograde until December, creating a powerful time for reflection, especially in career goals and family issues. Saturn and Neptune reside in your Solar 4th flashing hazard lights to slow down. This transition will be over soon enough. Mars and Uranus bestow vitality, health and healing to aid in your journey. Unexpected happy surprises appear as bonuses, payouts in investments, tax returns or inheritances.

AQUARIUS: Pluto continues its slow trek in Aquarius electrifying your charismatic energy and dynamic rebirth. Additionally, love is in the air. Both casual encounters and long-term soulmates have favorable aspects in the Solar 5th and 7th Houses. Your mental acumen is turbo-charged while your professionalism shines in the business world. When Venus retrogrades in October and November, a former love may make an appearance to try to set things straight.

PISCES: If health is everything, then the 6th House lineup grants your medical wishes. Your healing and stamina are welcomed gifts from Jupiter, Mercury and the Sun. Thankfully; limitations are in the rear-view mirror. Saturn and Neptune, your ruler, suggests prudence in the house of finance. This is positive, as a cautionary outlook can limit senseless over-spending until Saturn departs. Neptune, your ruler, is inspiring spiritual growth with peace and contentment alike.





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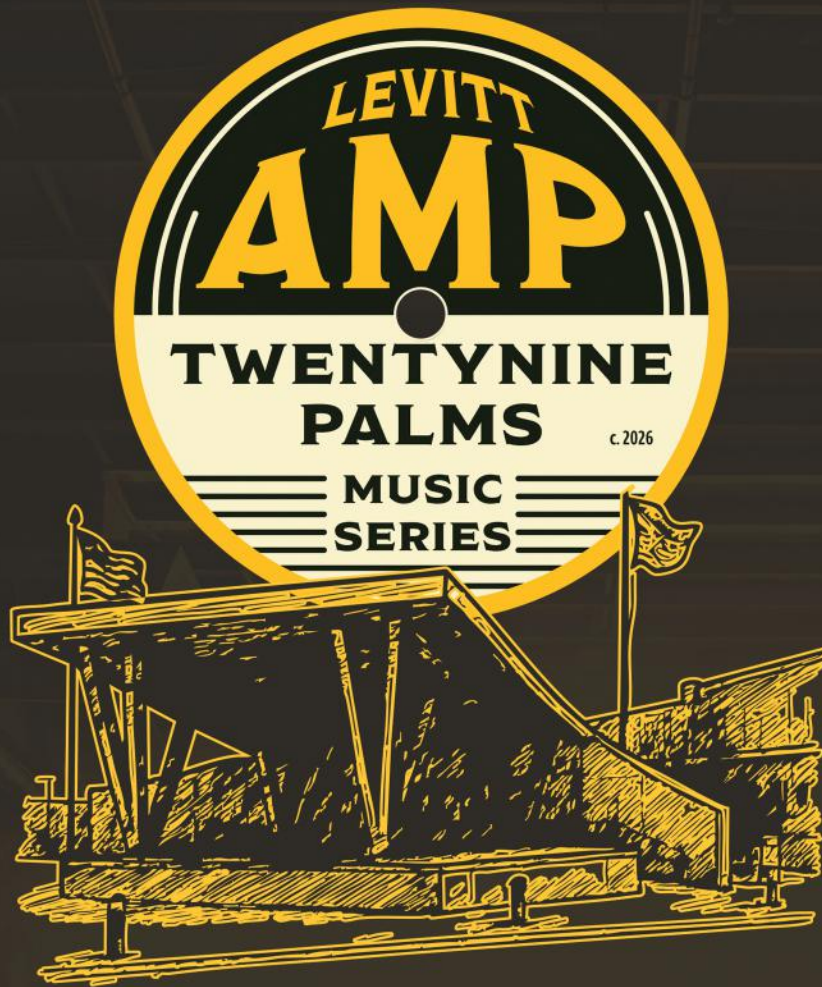


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HOT SPRINGS ETERNAL!

Make Azure Palm Hot Springs Resort and Day Spa Oasis your geothermal getaway

By Stacy Davies

Just a bit north of the 10 freeway, perched above Palm Springs, Cathedral City, and all other Coachella Valley towns, you'll find the still rather undiscovered land of Desert Hot Springs, or DHS, as it's locally known. Formerly called simply Miracle Hill, the region sits on a single geothermal field with roughly 200 wells that with the help of fractures from the San Andreas Fault, push mineral waters of 120-160 degrees above ground, a process shaped over thousands of years. The waters were first utilized by the Cahuilla peoples, who referred to it as sec-he, meaning "boiling water," and over the centuries played an important role in their creation myths long before the first settler, Welsh immigrant Hilda Maud Gray, staked her claim in 1908.

The following years, the region saw a few more pioneers snatch up land, but it was after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act in 1862 that colonizers began arriving in herds—including some less threatening explorers such as Cabot Yerxa, a homesteader who deeply revered both the land and its people and preserved much of that heritage in his 35-room pueblo turned museum. In 1941, L.W. Coffee opened the first bathhouse and kicked off the spa developments that would eventually give the land its current moniker, "The Mineral Water Capital of the World."

Since those early decades, the city has ebbed and flowed in its growth and is now home to around 20

mineral spring resorts. From quaint respites for lovers to family-friendly fare that capitalizes on the waterworks, there's something for every disposition on the hill, especially for those seeking adults-only Zen hideaways like Azure Hot Springs Resort and Spa.

Overlooking Mt. San Jacinto on the edge of what is known as the "Miracle Hill Spa Zone," Azure Hot Springs offers 10 free-flowing mineral pools and small tubs in their oasis garden, which also includes a pebble-stream "reflexology walk" that's sure to activate your plantar pressure points and realign your energy. In fact, realignment is the main focus of every aspect of the resort.

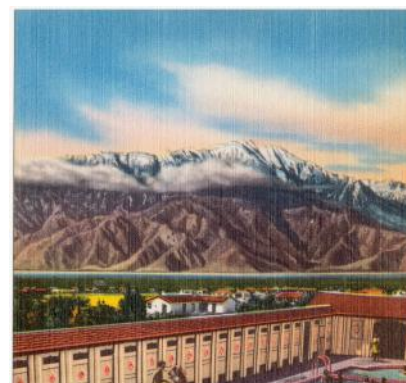
"People come here specifically to relax, recharge, and rejuvenate," says resort spokesman Richard Lambakis. "And not all spas can get you there."

This six-acre arid escape is the brainchild of Maria Lease, who refurbished the grounds about five years ago according to her personal vision. The result is simply spectacular—with emphasis on the word simple. While most spa experiences promise a meditative *modus vivendi*, Azure Resort specifically wants you to de-amplify. In fact, there's even a cap on the noise level (and, if you happen to have what Richard refers to as "a strong voice," be prepared to quiet yourself—and my apologies to both Richard and the guests that day!). They also encourage minimal phone usage and have built-in sanctuary pockets where if one absolutely must

take a call in the public space, you're far enough away to not disrupt the rejuvenation of your fellow guests.

In addition to the expected yoga, massage, facials, juice cleanses and sauna sessions, the resort also features a Himalayan salt rock room built entirely from salt bricks and heated by copper pipes—especially try this for antibacterial, antiviral halo-therapy that helps you catch those Z's at night. If you're not quite ready for bed, however, instead head over to the frosted-over "cold room," an icebox-like shock to the system that'll jolt those impurities clean out of your system—or at least keep your vicious perimenopause temporarily at bay.

Azure offers "spa suite" rooms with their own mineral spring tub, as well as "balcony view" rooms that overlook the Zen garden and Santa Rosa Mountains. They even donate a dollar per person from each day spa visit to DHS Opening Doors, a non-profit that offers the children of Desert Hot Springs excursions outside of the region, including trips to Griffith Park and Disney Concert Hall. So, whether you need a weekend or a single day spa escape, or maybe just a healthy, from-scratch pesto chicken and squash bowl at their café, Azure Hot Springs Resort and Spa Oasis most definitely fits your bill. 🐦



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ONE HUNDRED & EIGHTEEN POUNDS OF TNT

Wonder Valley performance artist Tanya Gagné blows your mind!

By Stacy Davies



There are about a dozen different ways one can experience the big bang in the small package that is Tanya Gagné. You might be lasoed from your audience seat and pulled onstage by her rootin', tootin' cowgirl, Joy Rides, or you may have the plucky pleasure of hanging with Goldie Hen, the world's only hula-hooping chicken.

If you inhabit Las Vegas, New York, London, or myriad other metropolises, you may have stumbled upon neo-vaudevillian sensation The Wau-Wau Sisters, the "scandalous circus sideshow striptease spectacular" *Night of Joy*, the magic-and-ballet burlesque comedy of *Birds of Play*, or the surreal, western-themed mobile theatre project *The Horses Mouth*.

She's sold-out the Sydney Opera House and won at the Edinburgh Fringe and Joshua Awards, and any way you slice it, swing it, saw it in two or spin it around on its glammy, glittery, harebrained head, you've just been granted temporary access to the frenzied imagination and fiery form of this petite, rural-New-England-native-

turned-Wonder Valley powerhouse—who was once a rigger and deckhand aboard Baltic trading ships.

Yucca Brevifolia Magazine:

From sea legs to air legs! How did this happen?!

Tanya Gagné: [laughs] I was living in New York City and attending Tisch School of the Arts for dramatic writing, but I just wasn't ready. I wanted to trip around, I wanted to travel the world.

And what did you see?

Everything! I sailed on tall ships from Sweden to Africa to South America. Crossing the Atlantic, hands down, was one of the most profound experiences of my life—like, not seeing land for 40 days! I hopped off the ship in New York three years later.

That's a far cry from Salem, Massachusetts where you were born. In New York you created an aerial and circus school—in your loft?

Yes. I was obsessed with trapeze and trained with Russian coach Irina Gold, a former Soviet Olympic gymnast. Later, I found one of my mentors, Jennifer Miller—a bearded lady and Yale Scholar who created Circus Amok, a very “bread and puppet”- style circus, which means socio-political content rooted in the idea that art should be accessible to the pub-

lic, not just a privilege for the rich. We did free shows all around the parks of New York City. I was like, “I'm going to save the world!” [laughs]

I performed and studied both here and abroad for about five years, and then I opened the first aerial school in Brooklyn. It was mostly women—privates and groups—and I learned so much about craft and process. But, yeah, it was in my loft, which was not big. Almost twenty years later, I was ready to leave New York, so when they said they were going to demo my building, it was my ticket out.

Serendipity at work! Why Wonder Valley?

I knew I was coming West and that I was on some weird vision quest. I ended up in an artist commune in Washington State for a while, and then during Covid, my friend Kevin Bone, who runs The Palms in Wonder Valley with his wife Laura Sibley, offered me a rental house. Being in all that wide-open space was amazing. I could still train and have my outdoor shows, and I just met all of these amazing freaks.

You were even wrangled into an episode of America's Got Talent!

Well, I didn't get the Golden Buzzer or anything, but Simon [Cowell] said Goldie Hen was the funniest act he'd seen all year!

He hates everything—well done! So, what's next?

I'm definitely going to keep working in Las Vegas, and I'll still make time for my touring shows like Birds of Play and The Horses Mouth. All of these characters are so special to me, and their mission really is to spread joy, love and magic wherever they go. That connection and inspiration are what it's all about. 🐦



Tanya Gagné

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LITTLE PINK HOUSES

Delicias creates cultural cuisine for you and me

By Stacy Davies

Everyone knows the best Mexican food comes from little pink houses. That color, “Mexican pink,” or, more properly, *rosa mexicano*, is a cultural signpost, a symbol of Mexican identity that not only denotes joy and festivities, but was even once the celebrated centerpiece of fashion collections by journalist and designer Ramón Valdiosera. Formerly known as “bougainvillea pink,” Valdiosera introduced the cheery hue to the New York fashion scene in the mid-1950s, a revolutionary act that contributed to his legendary moniker, The Father of Mexican Fashion. Likewise, when it comes to Mexican restaurants, *rosa mexicano* not only promises authenticity on the menu, but can also offer an appetizing excursion to Mexican destinations as yet unexplored.

Sitting brightly along Desert Hot Springs’ main drag, Delicias vibrant façade is hard to miss on your way to the cluster of mineral hot spring spas at the other end of Pierson Blvd. But don’t mistake it as an afterthought. Owners Armando and Angie have gone far beyond standard south-of-the-border fare, infusing traditional expectations with an array of regional dishes that would be hard to come by elsewhere—unless you’re up for an extensive, semi-tropical road trip.

All of the recipes come from Mexico City, but, as Angie points

out, that translates into multiculturalism, not homogeny.

“There are so many people from different states in Mexico City and they share their recipes. Our mole poblano with chicken and chocolate is from the state of Puebla, the mole verde with beef and pumpkin seeds is from the state of Guerrero, and the mole piplán with peanuts and almonds is from the state of Veracruz. They make up our dish, ‘Tres moles,’ all three in one, but it’s only made on weekends because it’s a huge process.”

And that’s just the tip of the tostada. Don’t miss the Churros French Toast with vanilla ice cream, the Vulcan Taco topped with crispy melted cheese, or the Pambazos—a crispy-crust bread torta filled with potatoes and chorizo, dipped in guajillo sauce, and served with queso fresco. You’ll find it, among other delectables, in their “Street Food on Your Table” section. And definitely don’t miss the cactus tlacoyos.

For my lunch, I opted for the Chiles Gueritos appetizer: six fried yellow peppers stuffed with shrimp and melted Monterey Jack, served with chipotle aioli and soy sauce on the side. There was no passing up the Cochinita Pibil plate for my main dish, with its cazuelita of slow-cooked pork in orange-and-spice sauce, a side of rice and corn tortillas, and pickled red onion with pineapple-habanero sauce.

This incredible dish, which originates from Yucatán—the farthest southeastern point of Mexico—will have you ruing the day you must return to your boring old estadounidense diet. And that’s later today, of course.

Delicias also offers a kids’ menu and a full bar with cocktails as exotic as their comida creations—far too many to name here, but if you’re looking for unusual ingredients such as wildflower honey, homemade lavender syrup, chocolate liqueur, coconut cream, jalapeño-infused tequila, or edible flowers, their mixologist is sure to satisfy your spirits.

Open seven days a week, Delicias hosts special events and live music, and offers catering, so if you want to win friends or simply treat yourself to a satisfying, savory excursion, head to Desert Hot Springs’ little pink house—it’s the casita rosa that can’t be beat. 🐦





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Joshua Tree Art Experience

Exploring art galleries in Joshua Tree is like stepping into the soul of the desert – raw experimental and deeply connected to the land. From contemporary spaces to outdoor museums, here are some must-visit spots to immerse yourself in the local creative scene. Visit websites for hours

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