

# NEVADA MAGAZINE

WINTER 2021

## NEVADA OUTDOORSMEN IN WHEELCHAIRS

## The Belvada Hotel Opens

## Changing Vegas

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**Cover Photo:** Deb Sutherland

A mule deer buck stands amidst snow-covered trees near Dayton.







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TRAVEL NEVADA

# Only at NevadaMagazine.com

## WEB EXTRAS



**Yesterday: Towards Outer Space -** In summer 1967, the summer of atomic testing raged on in Nevada, and in the pages of *Nevada Magazine*. In our Summer 1967 issue, author John. V. Young describes what archeologists of the post-atomic age would think had they excaveted the Nevada Test Site.

**Headwaters of the Amargosa River -** The Amargosa is one of the world's longest underground rivers, flowing for 185 miles, largely unseen through parts of southern Nevada and southeastern California, except where it occasionally surfaces to create ecologically rich oases. Subsurface water flows southwest before reaching the upper Oasis Valley at the 7J Ranch. The Nature Conservancy purchased the 900-acre 7J Ranch near Beatty in 2019, and with the acquisition, the ranch's land and water will continue to be available for migratory birds, waterfowl, coyote, bobcat, kit fox, pronghorn, mule deer, and more. **By Chip Carroon**



## VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE COVER!




Which cover would you have chosen?
Visit nevadamagazine.com/covers to see the great images that almost made our cover this month, and vote for which one you would have chosen! The winning photo will be posted on our website, and all who vote will have a chance to **win a free one-year online subscription**!

*Congratulations to Dave Williams and Sharlea Taft for voting in the last round! Both were randomly selected to receive a free 1-year digital subscription to Nevada Magazine!*

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**ICYMI**, every day of the week we post a **photo of the day** on Facebook and Instagram. Follow our pages to get your daily dose of Nevada!

## Stay up to date

**NEVADA WIDE WEB**

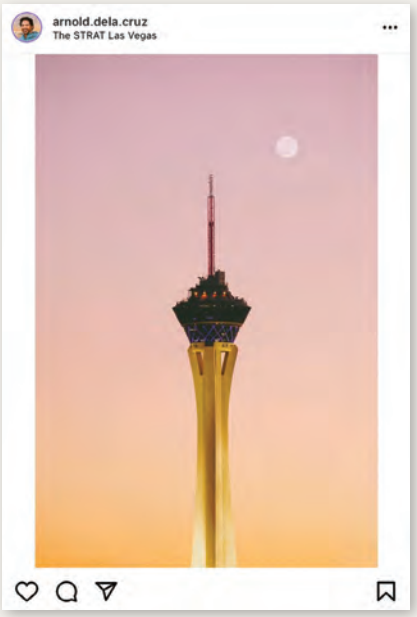
Instagram
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Would you like to see your Instagram page featured in *Nevada Magazine*? Use **#nvmag** and let us know about your **#Nevada** adventure!









# A Nevada State of Mind

Nevada achieved statehood in 1864 during the Civil War, one of the darkest—if not the very darkest—periods of America's history. For 157 years, this scrappy, dusty, vast land and its people has stood for its country, as our motto states, and maybe even a little more for itself. Nevadans are fiercely proud, fiercely loyal, and fiercely resourceful. We survive because we're too damn stubborn not to, frankly.

We had a challenging year last year, but the pride Nevadans feel for their state was rarely dimmed. I know not everyone will agree with that statement, and that's OK because when push comes to shove, I know Nevadans love this state even in its toughest times.

We love it so much, we don't want anyone else moving here for fear of ruining our great state. Californians particularly get pounded by Nevadans as the reason for what ails us, from traffic issues to housing prices and everything in between. And while we all can wax nostalgic about the good ol' days and how things used to be when it was just "us," the truth is Nevada has always attracted people to move here. I grew up here and remember hearing the same comments when I was a kid.

It's true, and has been for some time, that the percentage of people born in Nevada living in Nevada is the lowest in the U.S. Today it's somewhere around 26 percent of us who can say we took our first breath here. My mother was born in Wisconsin, but she's lived here for 55 years and I feel comfortable calling her a Nevadan. My grandchildren were born in Maryland, but today, they are Nevadans. People who have lived here a year can be Nevadans as I see it; friends I grew up with who live as far away as Florida can still call themselves Nevadans, too.

*"Nevadans are fiercely proud, fiercely loyal, and fiercely resourceful. We survive because we're too damn stubborn not to, frankly."*

Being a Nevadan, one who was born here, makes me particularly proud. I love it here, beyond words. But what I really love is how people who move here endeavor to embrace our landscape, our traditions, our history—and especially, our state's pronunciation. They moved here because they wanted to be here; I had no choice (well, not until I moved back after a lapse in geographic judgment).

We made it through a rough, rough year last year and we did it together. Nevadans of all stripes and all length of time living here just want to experience the great life we have here. I welcome any who love this state as I do and I encourage everyone to discover your Nevada. There's a whole lot of room to move here, so stretch out, and discover (or maybe rediscover) what all Nevadans know: there's no place like home.



**Megg Mueller**, Executive Editor
mmueller@nevadamagazine.com

# LETTERS

### JUST CAN'T SAY GOODBYE

I often say to myself, "You've been subscribing for 70 years, Virginia. Maybe it's about time to just give it up." But then I just can't let go of getting the magazine. Not yet anyway.
**— Virginia Rassuchine, Sparks**




### LIVING VICARIOUSLY

This last issue was one of the best ever. It was absolutely spectacular. Other people I have talked to have even asked "have you read this issue?" The articles were really more than interesting, although I can't hike across mountains anymore, it sure is fun to read.**— Tay & Kate Schuff, Las Vegas**

The new fall issue is great—making me want to road trip and explore!
**— Alissa Kelly, via email**

**WE VALUE YOUR INPUT**
Write to editor@nevadamagazine.com or via mail at 401 N. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701. You can also comment on stories and read more letters at nevadamagazine.com. Letters and comments are subject to editing.

# CONTRIBUTORS

## CRAIG **MACDONALD**



Pulitzer Prize-nominee Craig MacDonald loves Nevada and its amazing history. The Nevada Historical Society member's story about the state's first woman sheriff appeared in "The Historical Nevada Magazine" book. He has spoken at Nevada conferences and authored 24 books. Fifty years ago, he rode in a covered wagon from Nevada to California. His great-grandmother came from Iowa to California in a covered wagon in 1853. ■ PGS. 24-29

## MARIE **NYGREN**



Marie Nygren is predominantly a landscape photographer, with the foundation for her work coming from inspiration found in nature, mostly the beauty of Nevada. Recently Marie has started researching and writing about the places she photographs. Sand Mountain was her first photo study and resulting exhibit, and continues to be a source for creative endeavors. ■ PGS. 30-35

## MARK **PETTERSON**



Mark Petterson, originally from Chicago, moved to the Las Vegas area in 2006. He had a life-changing event in October of 2007 when he purchased a Jeep, and since that time, he (and his family and friends) has explored more than 300 unpaved roads among his roughly 600 scenic trips. He's always looking for the road less traveled, and searching for new and rarely seen beauty. ■ PGS. 42-47

## RYAN **SLATTERY**



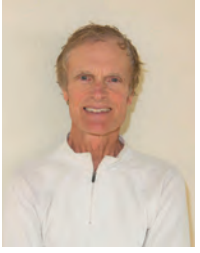
Ryan Slattery is a Las Vegas-based writer who has visited more than 50 countries. Close to home, he explores and writes about travel, hiking, and the cities of the desert Southwest. Ryan's work has appeared in the "Washington Post," "Boston Globe," "Mother Jones," "US Weekly," "Desert Companion," and TripSavvy, among others. Follow his adventures on Instagram: Ryslattery. ■ PGS. 80-87

## CLAIRE **WHITE**



Claire White is a public historian from southern Nevada currently working for The Mob Museum in Downtown Las Vegas. She earned a master's degree in public history from the University of South Carolina and a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. When she is not researching and interpreting American history, she is traveling across the Silver State looking for historical markers and collecting commemorative passport stamps. ■ PGS. 88-93

## CHIP **CARROON**



Though originally trained as a geologist, Chip Carroon always worked as a photographer as a second job, and later, as his primary occupation. He worked in the San Francisco area for many years, specializing in location photography for advertising and photojournalism. In more recent years, he has returned to the interest of his youth, landscape photography. ■ at nevadamagazine.com

# Up Front

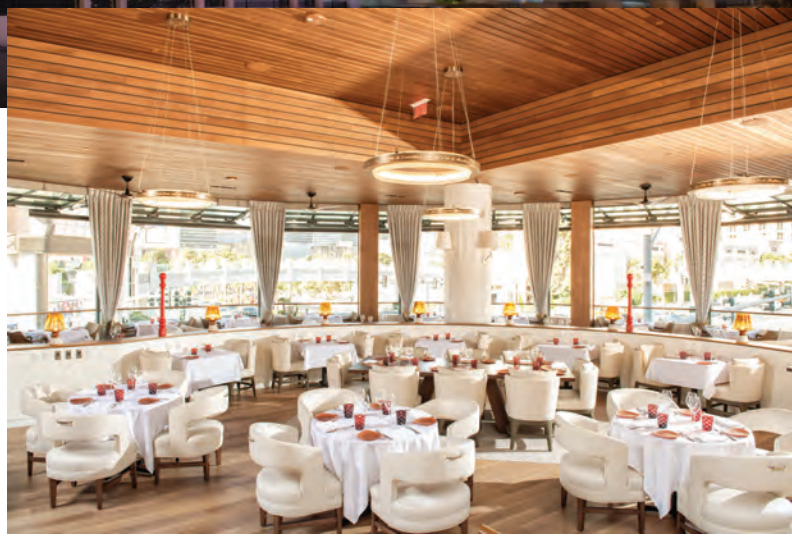



GAMING

## The Cromwell reopens as The Strip's first adult-only casino

The Cromwell is the final property to reopen on The Las Vegas Strip. The boutique hotel and gaming floor is now open seven days a week for guests 21 and over.

The Cromwell has 188 rooms including 19 suites and has received the Forbes Travel Guide Recommended Award for several consecutive years. The standalone boutique hotel also features a 40,000-square-foot casino with gaming offerings from single "0" roulette to EZ Baccarat to 100X odds on Craps to 3-2 shoe and double-deck blackjack. Additional amenities include Bound,





the elevated lobby bar; Interlude Casino Lounge; and the award-winning GIADA, the first-ever restaurant by celebrity chef and television personality Giada De Laurentiis. Guests of all ages are welcome at GIADA.

Self-parking will remain free for Nevada residents with valid identification, registered hotel guests, and Caesars Rewards loyalty members rated Platinum and above. Valet parking has been discontinued at this time for safety considerations.

**caesars.com/cromwell, 702-777-3777**

REVITALIZATION

## Historic Reno motel gets new life

The El Dorado Motel in Reno has been given a new lease on life. Kramer's Midtown has redeveloped it into a chic boutique motel with modern influences. The motel is located south of the main downtown area, near the exciting Midtown district.

The history behind the El Dorado began in 1949 when the property was built from the ground up into a Spanish-Colonial Style motel. The red tile roof and stucco wall cladding made the building look welcoming and homey, but over the years, the hotel fell into disrepair.

Joseph Kramer took the motel under his wings in 2019 and brought it back to life with a contemporary touch in 2020 for the grand opening.

This new lease on life of Kramer's Midtown is what Midtown needed to begin a new era. The future of the El Dorado hotel shines brightly with renovated features, such as a 24-hour clubhouse, a neon-lit patio and rooms with kitchenettes, mini-fridges, sofa-beds, and complimentary Wi-Fi.

**kramersmidtown.com, 775-900-2833**









## Battle Born Buzz

**Ferino Distillery** in Reno has been named one of the 10 best new distilleries in the U.S. by USA Today's Readers' Choice survey. The distillery focuses on spirits with ancient Italian origins. **ferinodistillery.com, 775-433-2033**

**Ichiban Japanese Steakhouse** has served downtown Reno since 1980, and now the popular restaurant is set to relocate to Eldorado Resort Casino at THE ROW. Locally owned and operated, the same owners, management, chefs, and staff look forward to serving guests. The new restaurant will be nearly 11,000 square feet, featuring 140 Teppanyaki table-style seats along with a sushi bar and cocktail bar. **ichibanreno.com, 775-323-5550**

Angry Birds has landed at **Topgolf** in Las Vegas. The game, which uses Topgolf's Toptracer ball-tracing technology, is family-friendly and perfect for all ages and skill levels. Just like the Angry Birds mobile games, guests will use Angry Birds characters as golf balls to smash down structures, defeat pigs, and earn as many points and stars as possible. **topgolf.com/us/las-vegas, 702-933-8458**

With a grant from the Tahoe Fund and contributions from local businesses, the **Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition** completed the third phase of its efforts to create secure bike parking within the Tahoe Basin. The coalition purchased and installed 100 bike racks in high-priority spots near town centers and one public bike repair, offering parking for 200 bikes. In total, the partnership has provided access to 450 bike racks at outdoor recreation locations, area businesses, and community hotspots all around the lake since 2018, offering secure parking for up to 900 bikes. **tahoebike.org/bike-parking, 775-298-0273**



KIPPY S. SPILKER

OUTDOORS

## Great Basin chosen top stargazing spot in U.S.

Star map company Under Lucky Stars has ranked the stunning national parks across America to determine the best stargazing spots. Great Basin National Park in eastern Nevada was chosen as the No. 1 spot to view the heavens.

The park just completed a 250-person astronomy amphitheater in November 2020, and plans to have programs for the public as soon as the pandemic allows for safe gathering.

The Great Basin is the largest area of contiguous endorheic watersheds in North America, and Nevada's national park has just 131,802 yearly visitors, making the park one of the best to stargaze from without being disturbed by huge crowds.

The guide analyzed the dark skies of each of the 62 U.S. national parks to determine the best locations for stargazing. The ranking took into account the number of visitors to the park, accessibility, and the light pollution of the park's coordinates to identify the ultimate stargazing destinations. **nps.gov/grba, 775-234-7331**

# EUREKA, NEVADA!

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SENTINEL MUSEUM 775-237-5010

PERDIZ SPORT SHOOTING: 775-237-7027




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## Battle Born Buzz

- The City of Reno has installed artist **Hunter Brown**'s large-scale steel sculpture in Midtown. Titled "Reciprocity"—the sculpture is located in the roundabout at South Virginia, Mary Street, and Center Street. Brown's abstract work emphasizes movement, and his designs have a gravity-defying quality to them. **reno.gov, 775-334-4636**

- The U.S. Board on Geographic Names voted unanimously to name a peak after the Devils Hole pupfish and Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish. At 4,355 feet in elevation, the previously unnamed **Pupfish Peak** is a high point in an area known as Devils Hole Hills on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The peak is approximately 7 miles southeast of Devils Hole. **nps.gov/deva, 760-786-3200**

- **Lip Lab** by BITE has brought the infinite possibilities of clean custom lipstick to Las Vegas at Fashion Show Las Vegas. Las Vegas will be Lip Lab's fifth location in the U.S. and Canada. The 1,030-square-foot store takes beauty to the next level—combining clean, high-quality product with total customization. **vegas.liplabboutique.com**

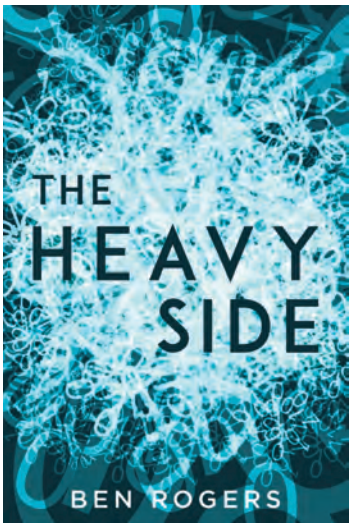
- Continuing its tradition of well-prepared coffees, toasts, teas, and pastries, **Founders Coffee** has opened a second location in Henderson. Locally owned and operated, the space will offer social-distancing friendly options including drive-thru, take out, spaced dine-in, and delivery. The original location in Las Vegas opened in 2019. **founderscoffeeco.com, 702-916-4442**

- **Frey Ranch Distillery**, which recently released its Straight Bourbon and Straight Rye Whiskeys, announced that both its releases have received gold medals, the top honor at the 2020 Whiskies of the World Awards. Additionally, Frey Ranch Straight Rye Whiskey was awarded 'Best in Class' in its category. Whiskies of the World is one of the largest and most popular consumer whisky tasting events in the country. **freyranch.com, 775-423-4000**

## NEVADA BOOKS

### "The Heavy Side"

**By Ben Rogers, CQ Books, 261 pages, fiction**

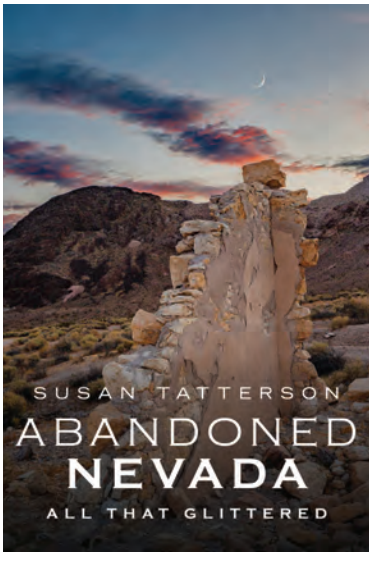



The second novel by Reno author Ben Rogers follows a hotshot Silicon Valley programmer as he teams up with a Mexican drug cartel. Vik Singh has developed a lucrative app for drug dealers, and now both the DEA and the cartel are hunting him. Narrated by Vik's girlfriend, Remi, the story grapples with America's insatiable hunger for drugs and the human toll it takes. We witness a young man confronting his artistic pride and a young couple trying to make up for past betrayals.

Rogers' writing has earned the Nevada Arts Council Fellowship and Sierra Arts Foundation grant. He is the lead author of two award-winning books on nanotechnology and has worked at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He is currently Director of Engineering at NevadaNano, and lives in Reno with his family. "The Heavy Side" is available at Sundance Books in Reno and on **amazon.com.**

### "Abandoned Nevada: All That Glittered"

**by Susan Tatterson, Arcadia Publishing, 128 pages, non-fiction**




Nevada's vast expanses of desert are home to hundreds of ghost towns, both desolate and engaging. "Abandoned Nevada: All That Glittered," is a photographic exploration of well-known locations such as iconic Rhyolite with its towering ruins, as well as some not-so-famous and more hidden towns such as Blair. They are precious reminders of the grit and determination—and in many cases, greed—that drove the settlement of the Southwest. With 144 images of these towns, the book is a loving documentation of these tenuous towns.

Tatterson is professor of digital media at Central Arizona College. She began photographing America's abandoned landscape in 2008 as part of her MFA thesis at the University of Baltimore. Her book can be found online at many vendors.



# ROAM MEANS NEVADA.

When's the last time you packed the family into the car and hit the highway on a home-state excursion? To gaze up at thousands of stars in Nevada's dark skies? To explore a ghost town filled with stories? To get away from it all in one of our stunning state parks, miles from all the crowds? If you're looking for a safe, fun-filled road trip, you live in the right place. Because it's all right here. In your very own state. So, neighbor, what are you waiting for?

Maybe it's time to discover YOUR Nevada.

DISCOVER YOUR NV

DiscoverYourNevada.com/NVMag

GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK, BAKER

## Battle Born Buzz

- The C Concourse at **McCarran International Airport**—the Las Vegas base of operations for Southwest Airlines—is undergoing a significant renovation. Planned changes include new fixtures that will create additional space for passengers, updated flooring, and more amenities, all in an effort to establish a more consistent experience throughout Terminal 1. Changes include additional and more convenient charging stations; new terrazzo flooring; and maximizing hold rooms by upgrading current gate podiums with space-efficient models. The $13 million renovation is set to be completed in summer 2021. **mccarran.com, 702-261-5211**

- **The Spa at Silver Legacy** in Reno has reopened to the public, along with The Salon, offering premier services in hair, skin, and beauty. Locals are eligible for THE ROW's 20-percent off local's discount. Additionally, with a Caesars Rewards card, guests of The Spa and The Salon can now earn and use credits on everything they do. Team members have gone through company-wide training on health and safety protocols to ensure guest safety. **silverlegacyreno.com/spa, 775-325-7051**

- In a historic move, the NCAA has selected **Las Vegas** as a host site for nine preliminary rounds and finals of predetermined championships in Divisions I, II, and III to be held for the 2022-2023 through 2025-2026 academic years. **visitlasvegas.com, 877-847-4858**

- **The Nevada State Board of Finance** approved the issuance of up to $950 million in industrial development revenue bonds to assist in the construction of a 170-mile high-speed rail project connecting Las Vegas to Victorville, California. Upon completion in 2023, it is estimated that the rail system will remove 3,000,000 passenger vehicles from roadways annually. **nevadatreasurer.gov**

RESTAURANT ROUNDUP

## Tasty dining and imbibing news from Las Vegas

**Finger Licking Foodie Tours** has partnered with ARIA Resort & Casino to present a unique and socially distanced dining experience for the ultimate night out. This two-hour, self-guided tour leads guests through three critically acclaimed restaurants in one evening, all located conveniently within the AAA Five Diamond resort. Designed for a minimum of two people, this pioneering tour provides immediate seating with VIP service at three of Vegas' most sought-after restaurants to enjoy signature dishes at each venue, including a sweet treat. Participating restaurants include Carbone, Jean Georges Steakhouse, Catch, and Bardot Brasserie. **fingerlickingfoodietours.com, 888-664-2414**



ARIA Resort & Casino


Chef's Table at Scarpetta

**The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas** is thrilled to announce the launch of the Chef's Table at Scarpetta, an immersive, private dining experience centered in timeless Italian tradition. Parties of up to six guests can make reservations for the exclusive culinary affair online. Nestled between a spectacular display of animated fountains and an unobstructed view of Scarpetta's bustling kitchen, the private seating area invites guests into the warmth of an Italian family gathering around the Chef's Table. Led by Scarpetta's Chef de Cuisine, and Las Vegas native Michael Vitangeli, tales and taste intertwine to create an unparalleled culinary showcase. **cosmopolitanlasvegas.com, 877-893-2001**

Las Vegas' first test kitchen **Vegas Test Kitchen** is set to make its home at Fergusons Downtown. Taking over the former CHOW by Natalie Young space at 1020 Fremont Street, the test kitchen will offer rotating restaurant concepts, popups, and special events all under one roof for the community to discover and enjoy. Offering three-month residencies, Vegas Test Kitchen gives chefs a low-risk opportunity to develop and fine-tune their menus with the ability to get real-time feedback. Kicking off his residency with the launch of Vegas Test Kitchen is Chef Lanny Chin—"Chopped" winner, Chef de Cuisine for The Slanted Door Las Vegas, Greene Street at The Palms, and more. Chef Lanny will test out his ramen concept Slurp Society, offering a variety of ramen flavors including Tankatsu Ramen, Miso Ramen, and Maze-Men; as well as his Chin Family Eggrolls, Sticky Pork Belly, and Chili Garlic Wontons. **vegastestkitchen.com**


Chef Lanny Chin

VEGAS TEST KITCHEN

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*"Nevada's State Park System was established by the State Legislature in March, 1935, when by special enactment it designated and set aside certain areas, having unique or striking natural phenomena, as State parks."*

**Read about the beginning of the State parks in the March, 1936 edition of *Nevada Highways and Parks* or catch up with more recent information starting on page 80 of this issue of *Nevada Magazine*.**




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## Battle Born Buzz

**Great Basin Brewing Company** was awarded a gold medal at the 2020 Great American Beer Festival (GABF) competition, the largest and most prestigious beer competition in America. Great Basin was recognized in the Specialty Berliner-Style Weisse category for its Razzle Fo Shazzle, a sour ale brewed with real raspberries. This marks the 16th medal the brewery has won at the GABF, and the first time it has won gold medals two years in a row. Judges evaluated 8,806 entries from 1,720 breweries. **downtowngrand.com, 702-719-5100**

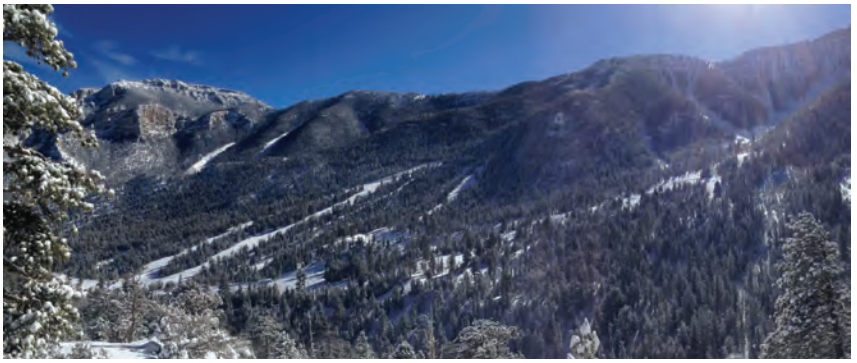
Visitors to the **University of Nevada, Reno** campus have the opportunity to use PayByPhone. The PaybyPhone app will be available at most hourly parking locations across campus, as well as the top level of the West Stadium Complex. People looking to park can use the PayByPhone app, website, or the service number displayed on signs at lot locations. Visitors can also extend a parking session without returning to their car using those platforms. **paybyphone.com**

As part of the ongoing **Nevada Humanities Exhibition Series**, a new virtual exhibition "New Monuments for a Future Las Vegas," curated by Wendy Kveck, opened online in December 2020 and will be on display as a virtual exhibition indefinitely. "New Monuments for a Future Las Vegas" curator and artists' talk will take place as a live Zoom event at 7 p.m. on Jan. 7. **nevadahumanities.org/exhibitionseries, 702-800-4670**

**Park MGM** has reopened as the Las Vegas Strip's first smoke-free casino resort. Park MGM is The Strip's newest destination resort and has quickly become one of the city's go-to places for entertainment, new-to-market dining, and more. **parkmgm.mgmresorts.com, 702-730-7777**

RECREATION

## Lee Canyon gets development plan approved



The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has issued a record of decision on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Lee Canyon's expansion plan. In 2011, the USFS accepted Lee Canyon's Master Development Plan; the EIS was a vital next step.

"The authorization of improvements at Lee Canyon is a win for local outdoor recreation and the environment," says Dan Hooper, Lee Canyon's general manager. "The most knowledgeable people in the field used the best available science. Through the EIS process, Lee Canyon was able to amend its plan, so it reflects responsible growth."

Projects at Lee Canyon will be addressed in a phased approach and timelines are not yet confirmed. High-priority items include mountain biking trails, parking, and additional ski/snowboarding terrain. **leecanyonlv.com, 775-348-0400**

PRESERVATION

## Reno church on National Register of Historic Places



With its towering carillon bell tower and picturesque location along the Truckee River, the Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in downtown Reno is a local treasure representing the embodiment of the Late Gothic Revival style. The National Park Service recently cemented the cathedral's importance by listing it in the National Register of Historic Places.

The cathedral is not only significant as the only local example of a building designed by architect John Neal Tilton, Jr., but is also the only example of a poured-concrete church in the Late Gothic Revival style in Reno. The period of significance for the building is 1949-1958, beginning when the main body of the church was constructed and ending when a Modern-style parish hall was constructed on the site. **shop.nv.gov, 775-684-3448**














# Beatty

## Make Your Peace of Mind a Reality

Tired of the bright lights of Las Vegas? Too hot in Death Valley? Looking for a friendly location with room to breathe? If you want a break from the closeness of the city and people, come to Beatty, Nevada, where Covid-19 protocols are practiced and open spaces and peace of mind are a reality.

This small town has long been known as the Gateway to Death Valley, and the most scenic entrance to the park. Located in the Oasis Valley, less than 120 miles northwest of Las Vegas on Highway 95, Beatty was established in 1904 as a supply center for miners, railroads, and Death Valley travelers.

Nestled snugly in the valley, Beatty is surrounded by three peaks; Bare Mountain, Sawtooth Mountain, and the Bullfrog Hills. In these hills, you will find miles and miles of OHV, hiking and mountain bike trails. More than 40 miles of marked trails with beautiful scenery beckon the novice and the most experienced mountain biker, plus hundreds of miles of off-road trails explore ghost towns, old mine sites and mills, amazing canyons, gorgeous geologic features, and breathtaking desert views. The town's landscape plays host to birdwatchers, hikers, geocachers, rockhounds, and history buffs hankering to leave the big city behind.

At 3,308 feet above sea level, Beatty enjoys a temperate climate and a lush landscape. One of the largest underground rivers in the U.S., the Amargosa, peaks its head above ground to supply water to a wealth of trees and wildlife. Bird watching, wildlife viewing (including Beatty's famed burros), and catch-and-release fishing are just a few of the delights you may not expect to find in a region so intimately associated with unforgiving deserts.

A casino, ample fuel and electric charging stations, hotel/motels, RV parks, tasty restaurants, friendly saloons, and the largest candy store in Nevada provide a wide range of year round comforts and services. Budget-pleasing room prices are found all over in Beatty, which makes it the perfect base for all desert explorations.

BEATTY NEVADA

**BeattyNevada.org**

COVID-19 controls practiced here!

# YOUR FAVORITE NEVADA ROCK


Gold Butte National Monument

TERESA SKYE

Each issue we showcase what we love about Nevada. Well, now it's your turn. We're dedicating these pages to our readers this year, and we're asking you to share images of your Nevada favorites. We'll pick a theme (see below) and let our readers lead the way!

We asked to see your favorite rock, and well, we weren't quite sure what we'd get, but boy did you come through! From giant slabs to visions that defy description, Nevada has got some seriously sweet stones.


Virginia Mountains

MARK VOLLMER


Stella Lake, Great Basin National Park

KATHY TRUJILLO


Schell Creek Range

TARA KLAAS


East Shore Lake Tahoe

DAVID N. BRAUN

See more favorite rocks at nevadamagazine.com/your-favorite-nevada-rock/

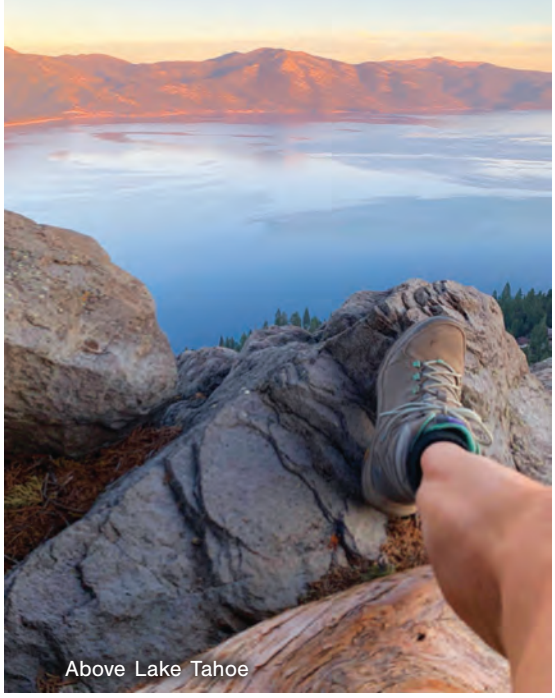
## Spring 2021 theme:

YOUR FAVORITE NEVADA **PET EXPLORING OUTDOORS**

Rules and submission instructions: nevadamagazine.com/favoriterules


Cathedral Gorge

ALLAN DUFF


Above Lake Tahoe

CHRISTINE VIRDEE


North of Sparks

JESSE WHITE


Winnemucca Lake,
Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation

JACKIE GORTON


The Propane Tank Boulder, Red Rock Canyon

DANA CHAPMAN


Little Finland, Gold Butte National Monument

STEVE DUDROW


Near Oak Springs Summit

NORM CRAFT


Pine Creek Canyon Trail, Red Rock Canyon

PAULA LAWLOR





ANTHONY CUPAIUOLO




THEODORE DEVIVO

Pages 18-19: “This photo is of Ian Kirk snowboarding on Herlan Peak above Sand Harbor,” says Anthony Cupaiuolo. “It’s a line that doesn’t always fill in, so when conditions are right, you need to get there as soon as possible.”

Left: “While walking in Downtown Las Vegas, there are a variety of murals that can inspire one’s creativity,” says Theodore DeVivo. “The abstract mural of the Beatles Abbey Road album was one of them. As I looked at the mural I imagined it having a reflection of the Beatles and the white background having a tan tone and created it in post processing.”

Bottom: Kim Hunter Steed captured this photo of some quail. “As I was driving toward my home I saw this beautiful quail couple on the fence post, so I pulled over to try to capture the image,” she says. “I love how the snow is gently falling on them.”

Right: “I was driving along south Highway 95 between Reno and Las Vegas early one morning after a late-season storm had dropped some snow in the higher elevations and rain in the valleys,” says Clayton Peoples. “Not far from Coaldale, I noticed that clouds were breaking in the west, revealing the White Mountains and Nevada’s tallest mountain, Boundary Peak. I pulled over in a safe location, employed a telephoto zoom, and photographed the unfolding scene—which featured Boundary Peak (and surrounding mountains) sporting a fresh coating of snow and some low-hanging clouds.”

KIM HUNTER STEED



CLAYTON PEOPLES

**FACEBOOK GROUP CHOICE**



RUSS COLLETTA

Russ Colletta captured this shot at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. “Water flowing in this creek is not all that common, especially the case in recent months,” he says. “So when some spring storms happened back in 2019, it was worth going out at sunrise to catch this fairly rare moment.”

Each issue, our Nevada Photographers Facebook group votes for their favorite photo out of three selected by *Nevada Magazine*’s Art Director.

**JOIN OUR NEVADA PHOTOGRAPHERS FACEBOOK GROUP** facebook.com/groups/nevadasnaps



CHRISTINE VIRDEE

Above: “One of the most magical things about the changing seasons in Nevada is the first big snowfall,” says Christine Virdee. “It’s magical every time, and I admit I shoot hundreds (OK, thousands) of photos while hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, and backcountry skiing. This hike, one of many above Crystal Bay, is always so beautiful.”

Left: “This was taken from west Reno the morning after a winter storm, right before COVID-19 shut down the casinos and their colorful glow,” Michael Lindberg says. “I was fortunate to capture this shot mid-week affording the opportunity to get some light trails of the morning commute.”

Opposite page: “A surprise snowstorm in the Las Vegas area in February 2019 was a rare treat,” says Paula Lawlor. “Grabbing my camera and warm clothes, I hiked up a bike trail off State Route 159 to experience the snowy scene. Quite a unique sight to see the Mojave Desert landscape, cacti, and the Spring Mountains covered in snow!”



MICHAEL LINDBERG



PAULA LAWLOR

# Ferris' Fantastic Wheel

## Nevadan created the eighth wonder of the world.

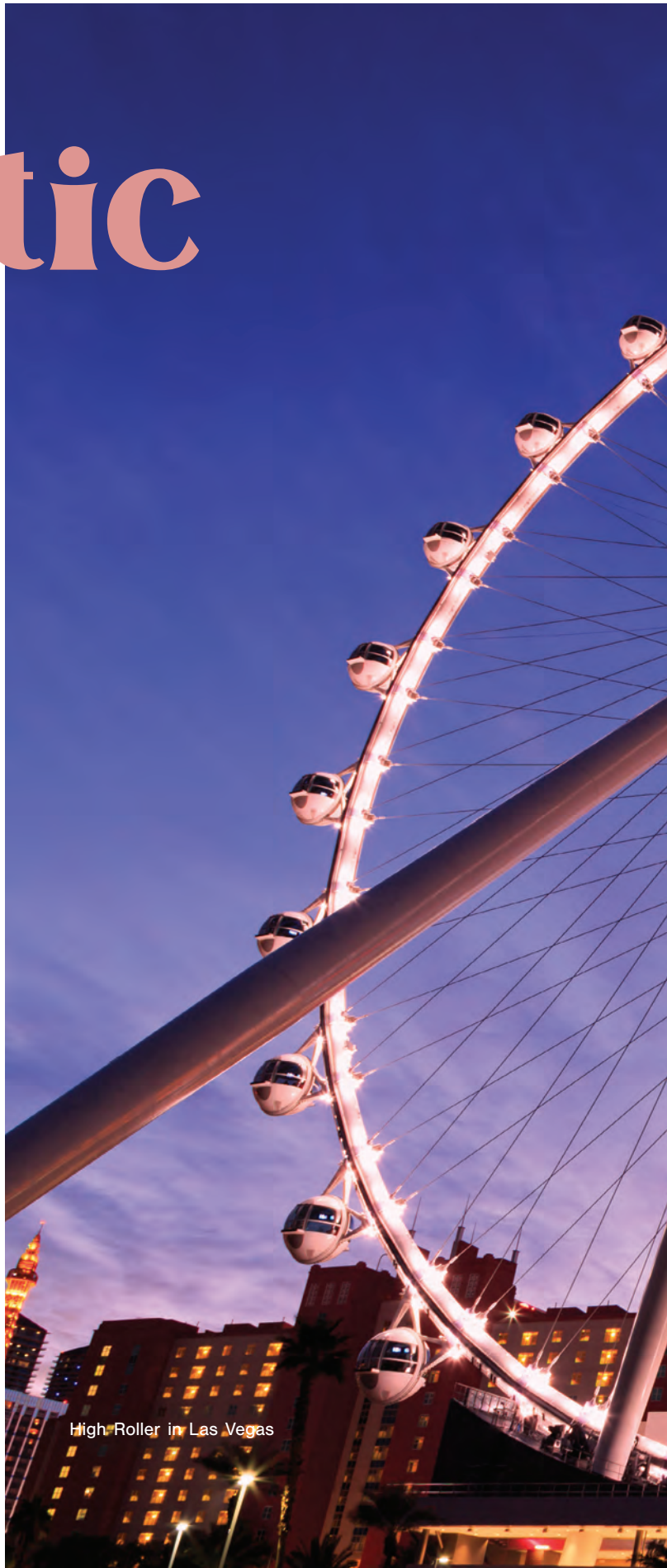
BY CRAIG MACDONALD

The 500-foot tall, 520-foot in diameter High Roller—located on The Las Vegas Strip—is the World's Largest Observation Wheel. It features 28 glass-enclosed cabins, travels one foot per second, takes 30 minutes for a complete revolution, features more than 2,000 LED lights and 112 cables, and runs parallel to Las Vegas Boulevard. The Strip superstar was built at a cost of $300 million by Caesar's Entertainment.

It is the conceptual descendent of a 19th century Carson City boy, who went East to create the world's first giant observation Ferris wheel for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. George W. Gale Ferris, Jr., grew up in Carson Valley and inspired the "Ferris wheels" so popular today.

### REINVENTING THE WHEEL

In 1864, Ferris Jr. was 5 when his father left Galesburg, Illinois, in a covered wagon to try farming in the fertile valley south of Carson City. Ferris Jr.'s father, George W.G. Ferris, Sr., was a horticulturalist who "saw gold" in the bountiful, rich soil of Carson Valley, where he built a ranch near present-day Minden.



High Roller in Las Vegas




RICHARD CUMMINS



George W. Gale Ferris, Jr.

Ferris Jr. loved to explore the Carson Valley area and he reportedly became fascinated upon discovering a turning wheel that hoisted water up to troughs for thirsty livestock. Some say he lay for hours at a time on a riverbank, hypnotized by the motion of the wheel lifting the water. He also apparently liked to study the waterwheels which caused sawmills to turn.

The motion of wheels was something Ferris would never forget. In 1868, Ferris and his family moved from Carson Valley into a home at 311 W. Third St. in Carson City. It's known today as the Sears-Ferris House.

The Carson City dreamer would end up earning an engineering degree from the prestigious Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. He then worked for a railroad (that had its own type of turning wheels) and eventually formed his own structural steel-testing company.



Sears-Ferris house

## MOVING FORWARD

When planners for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago asked America's top designers to create something "original, daring, and unique," Ferris was more than up to the task.

Remembering the wheels he had seen in Carson Valley, Ferris was inspired to create a gigantic observation wheel that would rise higher than any buildings. It would be 250 feet in diameter, 825 feet in circumference, 30 feet wide, elevated 15 feet, with 36 gondola cars (each with 40 revolving chairs). The center of the wheel featured an iron axle 32 inches thick and 45 feet in length.

Some engineers thought he was crazy. Nobody had ever attempted anything like it before and critics warned that it could not be done. They predicted the wheel would collapse under its own weight.



Ferris wheel at the Chicago World's Fair

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



FRANZ CARVER

But Ferris had a Nevadan spirit that everything was possible. Overcoming naysayers, along with mechanical and financial challenges, he and others in the brilliant, creative, hardworking team miraculously completed it in less than six months.

The buzz about the eye-catching project, which would cost about $400,000, started even as it was being built.

"People were wild to ride it and extra guards were required to keep them out," wrote Luther Rice, the project's construction superintendent.

At 3:30 p.m. on June 21, 1893, Ferris blew a whistle to officially make his dream a reality for the excited Expo visitors. Newspaper reporters would call the magnificent mechanical marvel "The Eighth Wonder of the World."

It became the superstar of the exposition, attracting eager guests like a magnet. More than 1.5 million people rode round and round on his huge Ferris wheel. Tickets cost 50 cents for an unparalleled 20-minute adventure.

For 132 days, visitors enjoyed the thrilling view of the Expo grounds and buildings in Chicago. The experience caused many to ride multiple times, helping it gross more than $736,000.





On the High Roller

ERIC CACHINERO



High Roller

DOUG NULLE

**Ferris had a Nevadan spirit that everything was possible.**

The wheel—featured in newspaper articles, advertisements, photos, pins, and postcards—captured the awe of the nation and inspired others to create their own observation rides, which became known to the public as Ferris wheels.

In 1895, the first giant observation wheel, which had been carefully dismantled, was rebuilt near Lincoln Park on Chicago's North Clark Street where it remained until 1903.

## ROTATING THROUGH HISTORY

Unfortunately in 1896, its 37-year-old inventor died of typhoid. He had sold most of his interest in the Ferris Company to his partners.

His epic invention was brought back to life and transported by rail to Missouri, where it was painstakingly reassembled for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. It once again stole the show.

Ironically, one of its main assets (its size) was a liability. Being expensive to dismantle, store, and transport, led it to an untimely demise.

There was talk of moving it elsewhere, but nothing developed. With nobody willing to foot the bill, the incredible, mechanical pioneer met its fate on May 11, 1906, when it was blown up with 200 pounds of dynamite and sold as scrap—an unfitting end for the historic creation.

Fortunately, Ferris observation wheels still provide magic and magnetism for the Las Vegas Strip and throughout Nevada and the world, keeping alive the name of the curious kid fixated by the wheels he once saw in Carson Valley.

# WIDE OPEN Spaces



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Ghost Town Exploring
Golfing
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Diners & Saloons

## SPACE TO PLAY...SAFELY.

***Need to get out?*** Here, you'll find wide open spaces to ***create your own distance*** away from others. Discover natural beauty, go off-roading, hike some trails, camp, explore Nevada history or just find a quaint out-of-the-way spot to have lunch. Out here the opportunities for getting back to reality are ***always open and safe.***

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NevadaSilverTrails.com

TRAVEL NEVADA

TRAVELNEVADA.COM

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– USA Today

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**PLACES TO VISIT**

Tonopah Historic Mining Park, Central Nevada Museum, Stargazing Park, Historic Downtown, Mizpah Hotel (Previously Voted #1 Haunted Hotel in the US), Old Cemetery next to the Clown Motel

TRAVEL NEVADA TRAVELNEVADA.COM

TONOPAH nevada

TonopahNevada.com





# Singing Sands

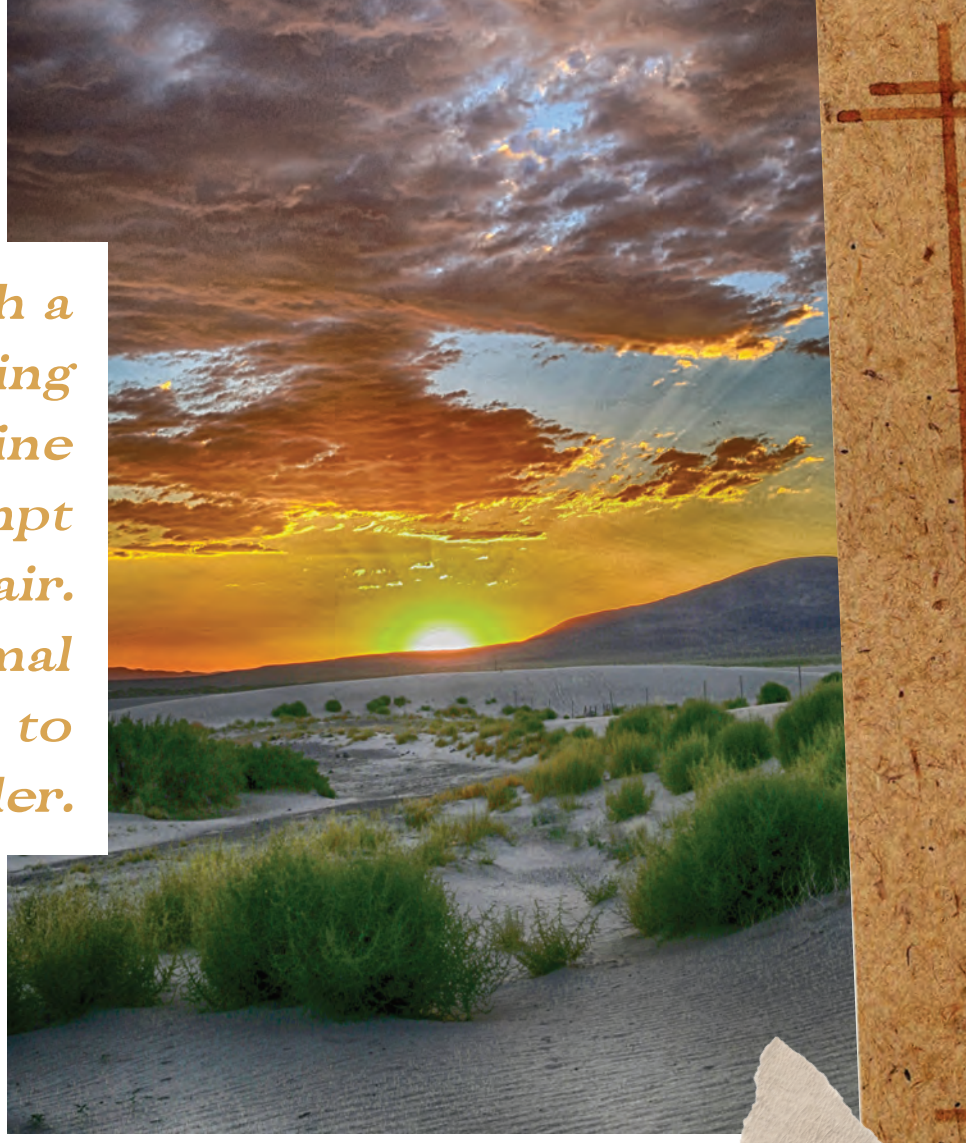
***When the conditions are right, Sand Mountain produces a beautiful song.***

STORY & PHOTOS BY MARIE NYGREN



Screaming. Roaring. Whistling. Squeaking. Singing. All can be used to describe the sounds of Sand Mountain's sands. I travel to experience this puzzling, impressive, natural phenomenon, some 30 miles east of Fallon, along Highway 50, where the expansive mountain is located. The emission of sound is caused by naturally blowing wind, but can also be created by movement, such as in creating "mini avalanches" while walking downhill. So first I must hike to the top. Upon arrival, with my camera gear and water packed, I walk across the flat land and ready myself for the ascent.

My rigorous passage to the summit starts with a climbing pattern—two sinking steps forward and one sliding step back. Several times what appears to be the last knoll to mount, and a sweet successful arrival to my destination, is often met with another mound of sand to conquer. Finally, there is triumph. I am joyfully 600 feet high and able to see the scope of Sand Mountain's immen-



*It is quiet, with a soft breeze stirring up small fans of fine sand, which attempt to rearrange my hair. Something primal makes me want to sit and ponder.*

sity, more than 4,795 acres stretching across 2 miles. The views from the top are spectacular. To the south is Sand Springs Pony Express Station, Huck's Salt Mine on Four Mile Flat, and the Sand Springs Range, to the north and south is the Stillwater Range, and west are fantastic sand dunes that look alien, as if I'm on the moon. The vast Nevada sunlit sky is a canopy over the 360-degree landscape. It is quiet, with a soft breeze stirring up small fans of fine sand, which attempt to rearrange my hair. Something primal makes me want to sit and ponder. I linger, photograph, and appreciate. I begin to anticipate reaching my quest to hear singing sand!

Here I go! First walking, then increasing my speed, the first low C notes reach my ears. Goooosh! Hurrr-rmp! Grooomph! Definitely a low-pitch rumble!

## SOURCE OF THE SINGING

My desire to learn more about the mystery of these sounds leads me to do research, beginning at the Churchill County Museum. I am handed a bulging folder with documents, pictures, letters, and articles from scientists, photographers, professors, and authors.

I read of a strange mystery in the desert, the singing sand at Sand Mountain, stories of which have circulated for years. The Native Americans believed the dune to be a living creature that roared. When traveling by,






UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



the terrifying mountain was given a wide berth. Stories abounded of people disappearing in a crater at the top, never to be seen again.

Scientific articles proclaim that the sounds and vibrations may be caused by heat, friction, gases trapped between layers, and possibly electrical influences. The billions of smooth, pure white grains of quartz, silica, feldspar, and magnetite, so uniform in size and shape, create the "voices." It is speculated that the conditions to produce singing are special and limited: The wind must be able to rework sand grains over long reaches of transport to create highly polished, round grains of sand containing silica that are 0.1 to 0.5 inches in diameter, and certain levels of humidity and 0.01 percent moisture are required, as is friction and compression of air. Only dry sand sings. Wet grains of sand stick together and make no sound. This acoustical energy is not completely understood.

The song of the sands is an eerie vibrating moan or a thunderous roar, changing with the seasons, humidity, wind direction, and variations of disturbance. Some say it sounds like rolling thunder. Or a vibration like a jet. Others hear a musical instrument—a violin, bass, tambourine, or zither. Its pitch can be up to 105 decibels and last several minutes.



## LISTEN

Blowing sands constantly shift and change the shape of Sand Mountain. Geologists say the sand originally came from the prehistoric Lake Lahontan that covered 8,500 square miles in much of Nevada. About 9,000 years ago the lake began drying up due to climate change at the end of the Pleistocene epoch, which led to evaporation of the ancient lake. The sand still blows today from Weber Reservoir through an opening in Cocoon Mountains, then through Simpson Pass and across Four Mile Flat, where it continues to accumulate particles in a huge pile against the Sand Springs Range creating this mound.

Interestingly, a Japanese researcher, Professor Shigeo Miwa from the Faculty of Engineering in Kyoto, under the guidance of the Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston, visited Churchill County and studied the mystery of the singing sands in 1992, then proceeded to write a letter to the museum of his findings and urging for the protection and reverence of the sands. At that time, there were only three desert sites in the U.S. with singing sand, thus he proclaimed them a rarity. Today there are seven known sites in the U.S. Three are in Nevada: Sand Mountain, Big Dune, and Crescent Dunes. Professor Miwa said that the singing of sand can be compromised by digging, detergent, oil, dust, and sewage.

Sand Mountain is a popular and fun recreation site, mostly known as a place to ride off-road vehicles. Climbing the mountain, sledding, photographing, and visiting the historical Pony Express Station are other favorite activities.

Perhaps the most special part of Sand Mountain is walking and hearing the sand sing. Add this to your adventure list. Be part of the legend of the mountain. The singing Sand Mountain adds to the reasons why Nevada—with its mysteries, legends, and variations of landscape—never disappoints.

### *HEAR IT FOR YOURSELF*

**Sand Mountain Recreation Area**
U.S. Highway 50
Fallon, NV 89406
blm.gov, 775-885-6000



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# AN ODE TO THE Desert Jackass



Marietta Wild Burro Range

# Move over, dog; man had a different best friend in the 19th century.

BY ERIC CACHINERO

Reno and Sparks; the sage and the pine; picons and more picons—Nevada has indeed churned out the most inseparable of dynamic duos. Both in legend and reality, however, indisputably no more inseparable pair exists than the desert silver miner of the 19th century and his oft-plodding desert jackass. Yea, the dopey donkey may have at times been scrutinized by nonbelievers for its seemingly inferior mental aptitudes, but next to the pickaxe and pan, this venerable beast was one of the most sharpened and indispensable tools in the miner's repertoire. Across the high and low ore fields of Nevada's frontier, the unmistakable harsh hee-haw bray of these desert dwellers must have been music to the pioneer's ears, for whether it was silver or water he sought, the mining man's best friend blazed trails at a near-snail's pace, though they always led to riches.

## A "HORSE" WITH MANY NAMES

Doctorate degrees have been procured that required less terminology than learning the dynamic naming of the desert jackass. The 1,000-times great grandfather of the common iteration of the donkey—the African wild ass *(E. africanus)*—roamed the plains of Africa, and still do today, though only 570 members of the critically endangered species exist. The modern descendants can be found in much greater numbers (some 40 million in the world). As an overarching term, both male and females are referred to as donkey, burro, or simply ass. Males are called jackass or jack, while females can be called jenny or jennet. When donkeys are crossed with a horse, the terminology becomes even more entangled. A mule is an infertile cross between a male donkey and a female horse, while a hinny is the same crossbreed with opposite parental genders.



NEIL LOCKHART

These million-moniker marvels—for some strange reason—have been fascinating mankind since the time of the ancient Egyptians, and were eventually brought to Mexico by the Spanish in 1528. History maintains that the donkey was first brought across the Rio Grande in 1598 by Spanish Conquistadors, and eventually made their way into the area that would become southern Nevada, where they would prove themselves as a relentless load-bearing workhorse, and a prosperous prospector.

## DESERT ANGELS

It is almost as if the desert jackass was born and bred to survive in Nevada. There have been countless stories in western lore of a lowly prospector dying of dehydration putting his blind faith in his trusty steed, who sniffs out and leads the way to a hidden desert spring. The inferior human *(H. sapiens)* will require immediate medical attention if it loses 10 percent of its weight in water dehydration. The vigorous burro, on the other hand, can lose up to 30 percent, and rehydrate in a mere five minutes (it takes humans a day). The only animal in the world that is comparable is a camel. So why didn't the prospectors simply use camels? Maybe it was their highly inferior sense of smell.



DARRIN BUSH



JACKIE GORTON

In the Spring 1967 issue of *Nevada Magazine*, author Anthony Amaral pondered:

*"The straying burro, capricious and even clairvoyant according to some prospectors, was highly cussed by burro-men who had to search far and wide when their burros took leave of camp. Still any old mining manual advised that the burro was best for desert prospecting.*

*But prospectors didn't read mining manuals. These were considered just a lot of foofaraw. If you were to ask why they chose the burro instead of a mule or horse, one answer might be that the burro 'smells the ore in rock.'"*

The desert jackass—much like its modern political counterparts—is also world-renowned for its stubbornness. This stubbornness, coupled with the animal's tendency to wander off, has led to some of the most famous fables in Nevada history.



MATT JONES

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Spring Mountain Ranch State Park

DINORAH ARAMBULA



Marietta Wild Burro Range

## ME AND Jim

Even before they first learn of Santa Claus, many native Nevadan boys and girls are told the legend of Jim Butler and his mulish—yet serendipitous—burro. The story maintains that in 1900, while pursuing a stubborn wandering donkey in the Manhattan range in central Nevada, rancher and hobby prospector Jim Butler bent down to pick up a seemingly unremarkable rock to throw at the animal to get its attention. The rock that Butler picked from the ground just happened to be high-grade silver ore, kicking off one of the largest mining booms in the state's history, and creating the town of Tonopah.

Though this legend is well-known, outrage exists just beneath the surface of the wealthy and high-brow Mr. Butler's story. Butler's name rings throughout the history books; monuments, celebrations, plaques, bars, hotels all bear his name. But what about Butler's desert jackass—the sole creature that bears the weight of the very history of this great state?

Surely let us forget not that without his jackass, Butler's name would have faded from these pages entirely. Editor William McClure Gottwaldt of the "Progressive West" newspaper knew this, and in 1906, he penned a commentary that paid respects to both man and mule. Gottwaldt argued that a stone monument of Butler should find itself erected on the streets of Tonopah, yet in great fear that it should slight the faithful jackass, he included the following ode to be inscribed and immortalized into the stone:

*I'm the burro. Don't forget me*
*When you hew Jim out of stone.*
*I will tell you, if you let me,*
*How this Midas ledge got known;*
*To slight me cuts my feelings raw,*
*For Me and Jim found Tonopah*

*Dates and data we'll dispense with*
*and all geologic rot,*
*But the narrative commences with Me*
*ME standing on the spot,*
*A-sizing up the ledge I saw*
*Where ME and Jim found Tonopah*

*Manganese or brittle silver?*
*Didn't know and didn't care,*
*But I noticed on that hill, sir,*
*Clumps of brunch grass growing where*
*The world will countless treasured raw.*
*Thus ME and Jim found Tonopah*

*So, when you erect Jim's statue,*
*Don't omit your long eared friend,*
*And I'll emphasize it that you*
*Won't regret it in the end,*
*So gratefully I'll Haw! he! Haw!*



ROBIN GRUENINGER

## FOLLOW YOUR HEART

As fabled as the desert jackass may be, today we may take solace in the fact that these four-legged miracles are real and still exist en masse in many areas of Nevada. So, if it's riches you seek, or find yourself with cracking lips and a parched tongue, you may consider following the soothing song of the magical hee-haw brays deep into the calm winter nights and well into the hot summer days. See where they lead you. It's cheaper than a lottery ticket and will probably be more fruitful.

## SEE THEM FOR YOURSELF

**The Marietta Wild Burro Range, located in Mineral County, is a 68,000-acre range that is home to approximately 100 wild burros. Established in 1991, the range is the first formally recognized national burro range. The ghost town of Marietta is a highlight in the range, and lucky visitors may see wild burros roaming about. blm.gov, 775-885-6109**

**Please do not approach, feed, or otherwise harass wild burro or any other animals.**

# TAKE THE ROAD Less Traveled

## These Southern Nevada backcountry roads lead to miles of scenery and solitude.

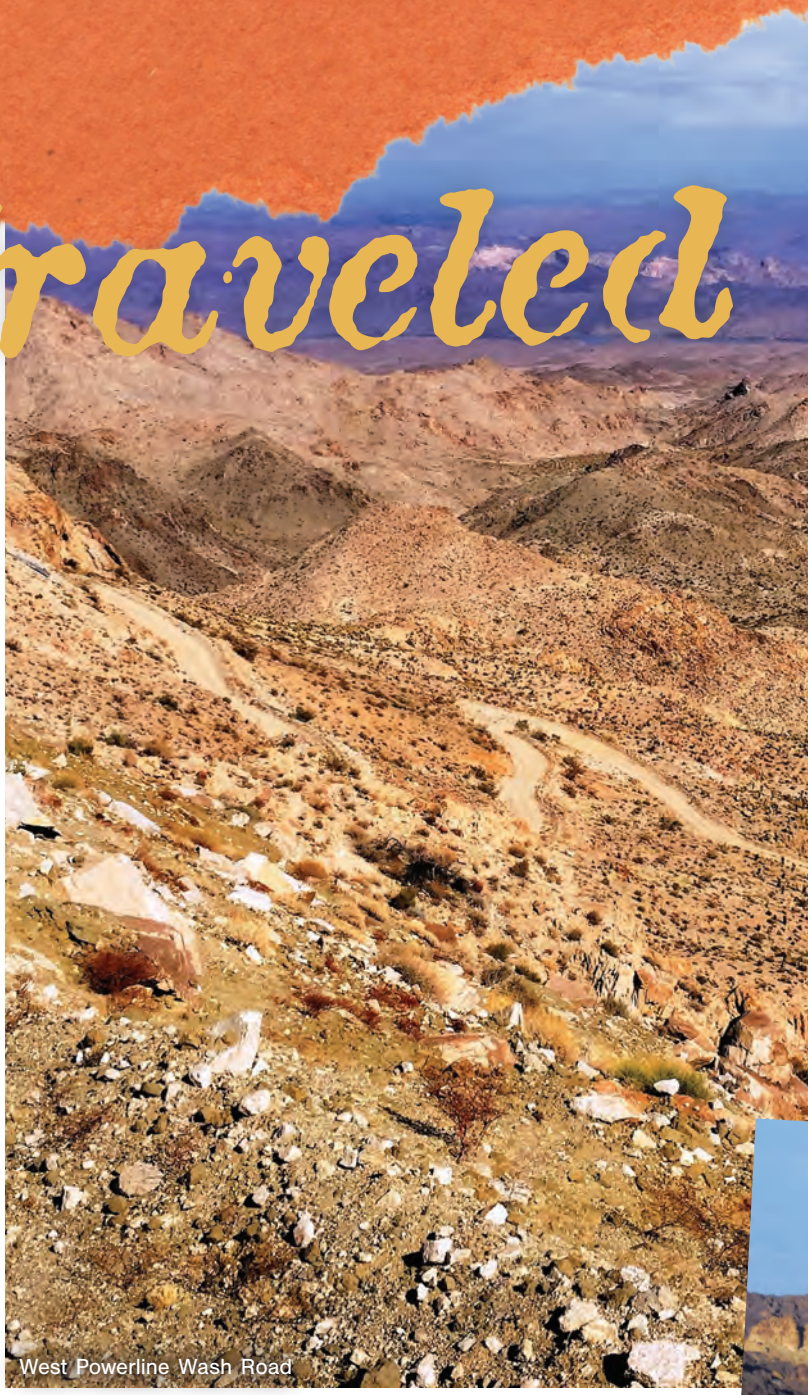
STORY & PHOTOS BY MARK PETTERSON

*"I go down every road there is, just to see what's around the bend."*

***– From "Around the Bend" by blues guitarist Joe Bonamassa***

"Take the road less traveled" is a familiar slogan, but I doubt that it fits anywhere better than the state of Nevada. It could easily be said that "real Nevada starts where the pavement ends." With thousands of backcountry roads to explore, Nevada travelers could easily never stop searching to find out what spectacular sight is waiting around the bend.

When you were a kid on a family vacation, did you stare out the window of the car, whizz by an obscure road that led into some intriguing backcountry, and think, "I wonder where that road goes?" I know I did. Unfortunately, growing up in Chicago, my dad's idea of a vacation was to drive 600 miles a day, stay on the interstate unless absolutely necessary, and spend all of about one hour in a national park. It drove me crazy. Fortunately, now I live in Henderson, and I can get away on the road less traveled easily, and savor the wonders for as long as I want. You can, too. Hundreds of backroads are accessible within an hour from the Vegas area, and the jackpot (to coin a Vegas term) is located in Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LMNRA). The National Park Service has done a marvelous job of designating approved backcountry roads. These are marked with brown signs with a yellow arrow, and a corresponding road number. There are four backcountry road maps; they are available online and at the Alan Bible Visitor Center just east of Boulder City. There is an amazing total of 150 open and/or accessible backroads in LMNRA, and I have been fortunate enough to have explored 143 of them (so far). It was a tough decision, but these are my four favorites.



West Powerline Wash Road





## WEST POWERLINE WASH ROAD (LMNRA #42B)

This is my favorite backroad in LMNRA because I find it to be the most spectacular backroad anywhere within three hours of Las Vegas. From its lofty beginning, it drops an amazing 3,600 feet in 12.3 miles to Lake Mohave, which is like being able to drive down approximately two thirds of the average depth of the Grand Canyon. The road itself is an engineering marvel, as it twists, turns, climbs, and dips its way through the tortured jumble of the southern Eldorado Mountains, all while somehow maintaining service access to a dead-straight row of powerline towers. The road features views of incredible geologic features; large, dense stands of teddy bear cholla cacti; many enormous barrel cacti; and in the spring, a variety of beautiful wildflowers. The reward at the end (after the last 2.7 miles on Aztec Wash Road, LMNRA #43) is a gorgeous view of Lake Mohave at a secluded cove, with the powerful and unique profile of Fire Mountain directly across the crystal-clear waters.

**The drive:** From intersection of I-11 and U.S. 95 (southeast of Las Vegas/Henderson), go south 20.8 miles to a legal crossover just beyond some powerlines. Turn back north for 0.7 miles and turn east on the gravel road. After about 6 miles, you will pass through the "Knob Hill" area, which is like a miniature version of the spectacular rocks in Joshua Tree National Park. The main road weaves its way between amazing rock formations, and you can turn off into the heart of this wonderland of rocks; primitive camping is allowed here.



Lake Mohave


Cholla Cacti

From there, the main road should be evident. Soon the road takes a big bend up and to the right, and be ready for a view that will make your jaw drop. You will see seemingly endless ridges of the Eldorado Mountains below you; portions of the road snaking their way through the hills; and Lake Mohave far, far beyond. And you will probably wonder, "I can drive through all that?" Yes, you can, and believe it or not, this road is well maintained and only a bit rugged in a few places.

About 3.6 miles after the high point (the beginning of the road), there is a beautiful view to the north, through a gap in the rocky crags. This is immediately followed by the most breathtaking portion of the road—a series of switchbacks down a steep hillside. Eventually this road merges with Aztec Wash Road; turn right (east) and head toward Lake Mohave. After taking a rest and enjoying the lovely view (and perhaps taking a dip), backtrack on Aztec Wash Road, and stay on this road (about 6 miles from the lake, Eagle Wash Road branches to the east; go straight here) back to pavement in the tiny town of Nelson. Turn northwest on State Route 165, which will take you back to U.S. 95 and the Vegas area.


Lime green volcanic ash

## CALLVILLE WASH NORTH ROAD (LMNRA #94)

This road offers a veritable all-star collection of spectacular sights and geologic features in its 5.8-mile length. Beginning at the mile marker 16 along Northshore Road, this road runs through backcountry filled with extraordinary layered, twisted, and faulted multicolored sedimentary rocks. It gives the feeling of true wilderness, even though it is never more than about 2 miles from Northshore Road.

The scenery starts out with a bang, featuring a horned peak with incredible curved, dipping strata. Stay to the left side of the wash, and soon the brilliant red, white, and orange cliffs of the Bowl of Fire come into view; you can park in this area and hike about 1.3 miles up a side wash to the colorful rocks. Just beyond that point is an amazing hillside of lime green volcanic ash. Before long, the wash becomes





Christmas Tree Pass Road



Gypsum veins

more like a canyon, and there are many fascinating geologic features, including reddish-brown cliffs laced with a spider web of white gypsum veins. After weaving through the narrow canyon, the road ends at a miniature slot canyon. A short and easy hike provides textbook evidence of the deposition and subsequent erosion of the strata.

**The drive:** From the Las Vegas area, head east till you reach Northshore Road (State Route 167). When you reach mile marker 16, the trail is just north of Northshore Road.

## CHRISTMAS TREE PASS ROAD (LMNRA #20)

This road offers spectacular and diverse scenery; it is one of the few backroads that is usually suitable for a carefully driven sedan; it leads to areas of historical significance; it can be done as a loop instead of an out and back; and it provides convenient access to other excellent backroads.



Callville Wash North Road

**The drive:** From the Las Vegas area, take U.S. 95 south past the tiny town of Cal-Nev-Ari, and turn east at the signed Christmas Tree Pass Road. The road climbs into a beautiful pinyon-juniper woodland as it reaches the Newberry Mountains. The high peak to the northeast is Spirit Mountain, which is considered as the center of creation by local Native American tribes. Then the terrain transitions from a wooded area to a wonderland of spectacular granite spires and pinnacles. Near the south end of the road, you can turn west to access the Grapevine Canyon petroglyphs, which are arguably the most impressive collection of Native American rock art within two hours of Las Vegas. After a very short drive on the spur road, a 0.3-mile hike leads to the heart of the petroglyphs.

From there, it is only 1.8 miles south to State Route 163. At this point, you can turn west and follow S.R. 163 through some beautiful mountains back to U.S. 95, before heading back north to the Vegas area. Or you could turn east, go 1.7 miles, and turn north on Nevada Telephone Cove Road (LMNRA #9), which leads to a lovely beach on Lake Mohave, as well several other great backroads.



## BOY SCOUT CANYON ROAD (LMNRA #59)

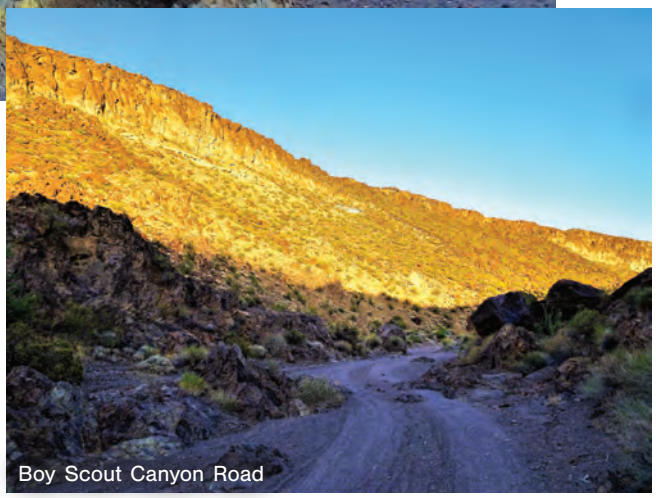
This road is fairly close to town; it is short and not particularly rough; it packs a lot of beautiful sights into its 3-mile length, and there are three awesome side canyons to hike through at the end of the road. Located just south of Boulder City, this road passes through a corridor in the Black Canyon Wilderness. It is flanked by soaring basalt cliffs (the edge of an ancient lava flow) on one side, and by rugged mountains on the other. The road winds between fascinating, multi-colored rock formations with hundreds of enormous basalt boulders which have tumbled into the canyon. At the end of the road the "main canyon" continues northeast past a cable barrier; from there you can hike 1.8 miles down a gorgeous canyon to a view of the Black Canyon of the Colorado River. Another virtually unknown canyon runs due north; it is rugged, narrow, and quite spectacular. A third canyon runs west and is also very scenic. After you turn around, the ragged edge of the lava flow is now directly in front of you, and on spring or summer evenings, these cliffs appear to ignite in the warm glow of the low sun, seemingly becoming molten lava again.



Boy Scout Canyon

Boy Scout Canyon Road



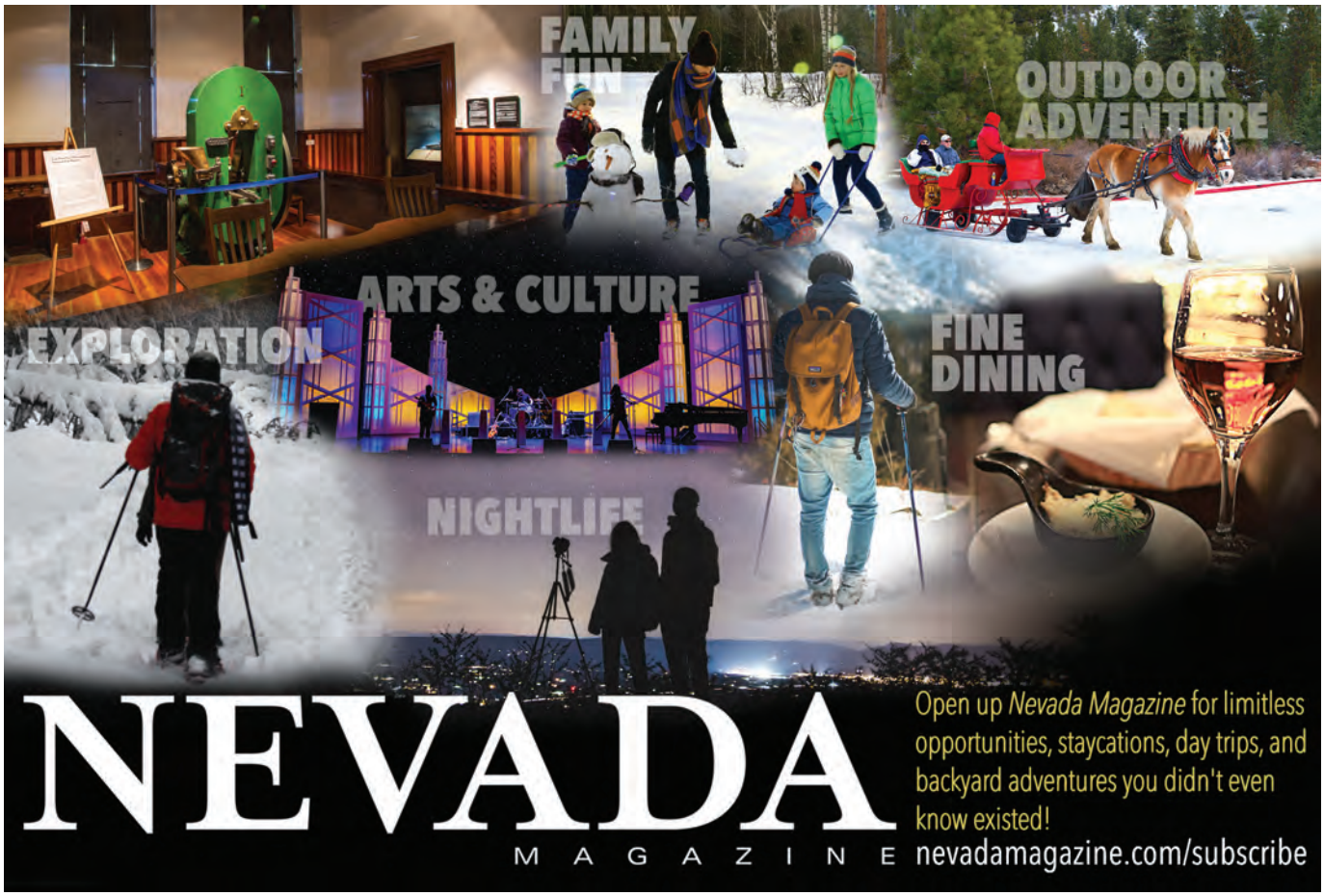


Boy Scout Canyon Road

**The drive:** Take Buchanan Blvd. south from the intersection with U.S. 93 in downtown Boulder City. Turn east on Adams Street, then south on Utah Street. Turn right at the sign for the shooting range and follow the pavement to a gravel road with an orange sign reading "Canyon Point." After 0.3 miles from there, go straight where the main road bends to the right. Descend the hill, and after about 1.5 miles, you will enter the the canyon. The sinuous stretch after about 2 miles is quite narrow, and probably the most exciting section of the road.

## RESPECT PUBLIC ROADS

When you are traveling in the Nevada backcountry, please respect and don't disturb the land or the wildlife; adhere to the principles of Leave No Trace; be prepared with a dependable, high-clearance vehicle (preferably 4WD); bring along essentials (especially a good spare tire, and plenty of fuel and water); and always stay on the designated roads. Do not travel on any backroad if rain is in the forecast. Tell someone of your travel plans, and don't depend on cellphone coverage. On LMNRA backroads, call the LMNRA office at 702-293-8990 to verify road conditions.




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# NEVADA STATE MUSEUM, LAS VEGAS

## STATE MUSEUM REOPENS WITH NEW EXHIBITS, EXPERIENCES.


"The Art of Crafting"

The Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas, now is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays through a timed ticket system. After temporary closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state museum on the Springs Preserve campus has re-opened with limited capacity and health protocols in place. Visitors will be able to enjoy new exhibits including a Shasta Ground Sloth fossil and a "Les Folies Bergere" showgirl costume, as well as longer-running favorites "Prejudice & Pride: The Fight to Vote," and "The Art of Crafting."

Sloths lived in Nevada about 33,000 years ago, and the "Shasta Ground Sloth" exhibit focuses on this particular member of the sloth family. The new exhibit complements the complete fossil specimen on display in the main gallery, focusing on such attributes of this creature as the claws, which the sloth used protect itself from such predators as mountain lions, saber-toothed tigers, and humans.

Another new exhibit features one of the elaborate costumes from the "Les Folies Bergere" show that ran for decades at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas before ending its run in 2009. Now on display is an outfit from the show's "La Belle Epoque" scene, one that reveals the patches and repairs made by the show's wardrobe department over the years.

"Prejudice & Pride: The Fight to Vote" acknowledges this year's 100-year anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave some women in the United States the right to vote. This exhibit explores women's suffrage in context with other U.S. suffrage challenges; the museum also has made this display available in an online format with a video series.

The museum also is displaying "The Art of Crafting," inspired by people who completed unfinished craft projects or repurposed and handmade clothes and toys during the state shutdown in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It celebrates the history of home projects with examples from its collections such as a homemade floral dress from the 1950s and a brightly colored shawl.

Visitors need to book a ticket online that will allow entry to the museum as well as the Springs Preserve campus on which the museum is located. Please check museum hours before visiting. The cost is $5 for adults and $2.50 for children ages 3 to 17.

**PLAN YOUR TRIP**

Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas
333 S. Valley View Blvd.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89107
lasvegasnvmuseum.org, 702-486-5205



"Prejudice & Pride"


"Les Folies Bergere"

# 2020 Great Nevada Picture Hunt *Your Choice*

## We asked our readers to decide their favorite finalist photos.

As we mention each year, choosing the winners for the Great Nevada Picture Hunt is a daunting task. While we struggled with choosing our winners, we found ourselves wondering what images you, our readers, would choose, so we decided to give you a chance to let us know!

In late 2020, our readers voted for their favorite runners-up in each category, and we've compiled the winners below. Enjoy!



**PEOPLE/ PORTRAIT**

**Jackie Gorton, People/Portrait:** "4 year old Tanner is hanging out on his horse, learning from mom, dad, grandpa, family, and friends how to manage all of the ranch activities during branding season. I wish I knew what he was thinking while he had that cute little grin on his face. His mom says he was probably thinking up some sort of mischief to get into!"

**Neil Lockhart, Events:** "This photo was taken in preparation to time lapse the super glow show in 2019. I had no intention of doing anything with it as it was just a test shot for exposure and composition. The flight ended up not happening due to wind, but I still had my test shot."

**EVENTS**





CELL/ MOBILE

**Justin Pulsipher, Cell/Mobile:** "It was one of the rare foggy days in southern Nevada as I was passing through Searchlight for work. I was marveling as I drove at how the Joshua trees just disappeared into the distance as fog obscured them, so I pulled over and stomped around in the mud for about an hour hunting for a photogenic Joshua tree with the right arrangement of trees in the background to show off the obfuscation created by the fog."



WILDLIFE

**Youri Ardenoy, Wildlife:** "While hiking on the Redstone Dune Loop Trail in Lake Mead, we decided to climb on top of a few sandstone rocks to enjoy the scenery when we heard hissing from in between the rocks. I used my zoom lens and was able to take this shot."



**Marie Nygren, Landscape:**
"I explored the secluded sand dunes on the east shore of Walker Lake. My affinity for the beauty of the desert sand patterns inspired me to trek hours across the terrain, which constantly provided an invitation to photograph markings in different landscape composites. This image is sand against the turquoise green backdrop of the lake. It was midafternoon and peaceful, after a morning of stormy unrest, still slightly reflected in the sky and water." *(This photo was also chosen first place in this category in the GNPH contest.)*

**LANDSCAPE (TIE VOTE)**

**Kirk Nix, Landscape:**
"This photo was taken while on a day trip to Valley of Fire State Park with visiting relatives. This 5-minute light show took our breath away."





**UNDER 18**

**Jenna Garrison (age 16), Under 18:**
"While exploring some hidden hiking trails with my friends, we stumbled upon this beautiful little pond. The water was so still you could see the reflection of the clouds perfectly. That was when I decided to lay down in the grass and snap this photo." *(This photo was also chosen first place in this category in the GNPH contest.)*



LONG EXPOSURE

**Jordan Thomas, Long Exposure:** "This lightning picture was taken over the Sonoma Range outside of Winnemucca. It was a crazy night with the sunset, a huge rainbow, and lightning all around! I have watched a lot of Nevada lightning storms and I had never seen anything as incredible as this one."

**Michael McCook, Cities/Towns:** "For many years I've wanted to capture a shot of the moon over the Luxor. After scouting out several locations I realized the upper parking garage at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport had the perfect angle. The super "snow" moon in February 2020 turned out to be the perfect moon."




CITIES/ TOWNS

# NEVADA OUTDOORSMEN IN WHEELCHAIRS

Volunteer group brings hunters with disabilities on the trip of a lifetime.



Lizzy Pritchett scans a field for antelope from an Action Trackchair, provided by Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs.

STORY BY ERIC CACHINERO
PHOTOS BY CRYSTAL GIBSON

There's a primal phenomenon amongst big-game hunters known as buck fever. The ailment is incurable and affects the 12-year old spring chicken and most hardened and experienced big-game hunter equally. Buck fever refers to, upon lining up the sights on a big-game animal, the largely unavoidable tendency to shake uncontrollably, due to the body's release of a high dose of adrenaline. The notorious buck fever has thwarted countless shoe-in shots, leading to tall-tales and campfire stories of "the one that got away" that will exist in perpetuity.

Hunting can be difficult; then factor in logistics, travel, practice, preparation, cost of gear, scouting, and buck fever. Not to mention animals are incredibly well adapted to the environment and have been outsmarting predators for all of history. All of this compounded can be intimidating to hunters, but especially those with disabilities who rely upon a wheelchair for mobility.

The prospect doesn't have to be intimidating, however, thanks to a group of Nevada volunteers who make it their mission to bring accessible hunting to people in wheelchairs. Each year, Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs (NOW) brings an all-inclusive hunting experience to a handful of lucky applicants. The group provides the hunt of a lifetime in Nevada, and couples the experience with adventure, education, and a whole lot of surprises.



## HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

In 2008, NOW 1st Vice President, cofounder, and former Nevada Wildlife Commissioner Chad Bliss began working with different Nevada landowners and organizations to make the idea of accessible hunting a reality. Though the effort began largely unorganized, its success was immediately clear. A generous donation from Nevada conservation group Nevada Bighorns Unlimited got the first hunt started. Since the first antelope hunt, NOW has expanded operations, offering many hunting opportunities of all shapes and sizes to people of all shapes and sizes.

"If you don't believe in a higher power, you will after this hunt," says NOW President Matt Murray. "It changes people's lives."

Matt, who has served as NOW president since 2013, has good reason to feel so passionate about his efforts. Since he came on board in 2011, he has attended the NOW hunts each year, and seen the excitement on hunters faces when they harvest their animals. He, along with his dedicated team of volunteers, wants the hunters to simply show up ready to have some fun. Matt and his team take care of everything else.

To be considered for a hunt, each individual must fill out an application form and meet a certain set of requirements (see sidebar on page 62), before their name is entered into a random draw. NOW covers 100 percent of the costs incurred in making the hunt happen. The organization has flown in hunters from across the country, paying for transportation costs, meals, hotels, and any other expenses. The Nevada Gold Mine Ranches in Dunphy acts as the headquarters for such a hunt, and has been there since the beginning. The historic ranch was founded as the TS Ranch in 1870 by Irish immigrant William Dunphy, and is now owned by Nevada Gold Mines (a partnership of Barrick and Newmont mining). Nevada Gold Mines raises livestock and grows crops on the property, and generously allows NOW to use the ranch house as its base of operations for the antelope hunts.

In addition to the Nevada Gold Mine Ranches, NOW hosts hunts at several other locations, including the Dean Ranch, Harper Ranch, and Cold Creek Ranch in Crescent Valley, and a ranch in Diamond Valley near Eureka.



Caleb Roach dials in his custom hunting setup.



Hunters Clint Robinson (bottom left) and Mike DeYoung (bottom right) are joined by family, friends, and Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs volunteers.

## THE HUNT

Each year since 2008, NOW has accommodated around three to four antelope hunters at Nevada Gold Mine Ranches (formerly TS Ranch). Despite the challenges and social-distancing requirements presented by COVID-19, the hunt still happened in 2020, and will happen again in 2021 following similar precautions.

It is at Nevada Gold Mines Ranches where the magic begins. Every aspect of the ranch house has been made Americans with Disabilities Act compliant, including wheelchair-accessible bathrooms and showers.

In 2020, one lucky person to receive an invitation to the ranch was avid hunter and sportsmen Mike DeYoung. Several decades ago, Mike suffered a neck injury due to a snowboarding accident that placed him in a wheelchair. Despite the added challenge, Mike continued hunting, and when he heard of NOW several years ago, he started applying for the antelope hunts.

"It's tough for people in wheelchairs to get out there and hunt," Mike says. "Unless you have a lot of money, there are not very many opportunities. It means so much for the disabled community to have these hunts."

Mike made the trip with his wife and daughter, and as NOW promises, every penny was taken care of. Gold Dust West donates all of the food for the entire week, and has since some of the earliest hunts. He was joined by junior hunter Wesley Barton who was there for his first ever big-game hunt. After introductions were made and hunters met with the staff and volunteers of NOW, they all settled in for the days ahead.






Mike DeYoung (left), Wesley Barton (middle), and Clint Robinson (right) are taught about firearms by Jeff Williams (far right) at the Williams Family Museum near Elko.

On day two of his visit, after a hearty breakfast at the ranch, Mike got to experience a special perk that NOW offers its hunters—a visit to the Williams Family Museum near Elko. Each year, owner Jeff Williams invites NOW hunters to check out his private gun collection, which features more than 1,100 antique and modern firearms. In addition to the firearms collection, the museum aims to tell the story of American history, offering a look at historical clothing, artifacts, and an eclectic collection of other knickknacks. After touring the collection and enjoying a meal provided by the Williams family, Mike got a cool opportunity.



Mike DeYoung shoots a .50-caliber Barrett.

"We got to shoot the .50-caliber Barrett at 800 yards," he says. "That was pretty incredible."

The .50-caliber Barrett is a variant of the rifle used by U.S. Special Forces.

After touring the museum and shooting guns, everyone arrived back at the ranch for dinnertime, followed by an impromptu "Christmas in August," provided, of course, by NOW.

"They surprised us with a bunch of gifts," Mike says. "Hats, cups, camo clothing, and other hunting equipment."

The following day, the hunt was on. Mike arose bright and early, and rode with several NOW staff and volunteers to hunt nearby alfalfa fields. As luck would have it, he and the crew came upon a sizable herd of antelope. After Mike found a suitable buck he made his shot count.



Mike DeYoung

It's a sacred moment when a hunter approaches his downed harvest, and Matt and his crew understand that importance.

"We always want the hunters to be the first ones to place their hands on that animal," Matt says. "I've even carried people before to make sure that happens. It's an indescribable moment."

After harvesting his antelope, Mike and the crew returned to the ranch, and as luck would have it, Wesley was also pulling in with his antelope buck. Two successful hunts completed on opening morning. After the animals were skinned, Mike was treated to a bass fishing session, soaking in his experience.



Hunters and volunteers skin an antelope buck.

# CELEBRATE ALL THINGS NEVADA IN 2021




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NOW's mission doesn't stop once the hunt is over, either. Volunteers Mark and Ginger Torrance, along with their son Michael, further the organization's giving spirit by handling all butchering and meat processing.

And just like that, another successful hunt is in the books, and it becomes time once again for NOW to start planning next year's hunt.

"The amount of effort and time that goes into the hunt way before it even starts is what impressed me most," Mike adds. "It's a year-round effort."

## ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

The year-round effort isn't just for antelope hunts, either. NOW has invited hunters in wheelchairs on pheasant, mule deer, and even turkey hunts. Impressively, in 2020, NOW brought outdoorsmen Clint Robinson on the hunt of a lifetime.

The hunts that NOW offer are all made possible by the generous donations of landowner tags. In Nevada, if a private landowner suffers crop damage due to antelope, mule deer, or elk, he or she may apply for a landowner tags for compensation, which can then be sold or donated. Last year, Ellison Ranches donated a bull elk tag to NOW—an incredibly generous donation considering Nevada sportsmen sometimes apply for bull elk tags 10-15 years before they are successful.

Of course, the expertise of NOW and its volunteers paid off once again and Clint had a successful hunt, and took home a respectable bull. Even more impressively, Clint's bull tag wasn't even the first one that NOW has secured. Hunter Chris Chapman also took a nice bull in 2019, proving even further that the organization will do everything it can to foster a fun, successful opportunity for its hunters.

Matt explains that each and every hunt is different, and mobility is sometimes a challenge. However, NOW has a solution. The group owns three Action Trackchairs, which are available if hunters need.

"The chairs opened a whole new world for us," Matt adds. "Having that chair and the ability to stalk an animal was a game changer."

To call these wheelchairs tanks is no overstatement. Each electrical wheelchair is outfitted with rubberized tank tracks, giving the chairs off-road capabilities and allowing NOW's hunters to traverse terrains that would be otherwise impassible in a normal wheelchair. Furthermore, NOW has outfitted several of the chairs with "gun racks" to hold the hunter's rifle in place, making it more suitable to maneuver and aim. In 2018, the group even rigged a custom system that allowed hunter Lizzy Pritchett to operate her crossbow trigger with her mouth by biting down. Needless to say, Lizzy was successful on her mule deer hunt.







Clockwise from right: Meat is sliced in preparation for dinner during the 2019 hunt. A celebratory meal is served buffet-style. Hunter Caleb Roach returns to the truck. Caleb searches for antelope. Caleb (holding antelope) proudly displays his trophy, joined by Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs volunteers.





# GET TO KNOW NEVADA | Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs

## APPLY

Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs' hunts operate on a lottery system. Eligible applicants must rely upon a wheelchair for 90 percent of movement and must have their hunter's education and proper hunt licensing completed prior to the hunt. These costs are paid for by the organization and its sponsors. The 2021 application opens in January. Visit nvoutdoorsmen.org to apply.

## VOLUNTEER

There are many ways to volunteer with Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs. According to the organization, "Each year's hunt has certain roles that need to be filled from camp cook, to journal keeper, to photographer, to gun expert. Between hunts, we need help fundraising, obtaining specialized equipment, getting the word to multiple media sources, and even delivering thank-you notes." Visit nvoutdoorsmen.org/volunteer for more info.

## DONATE

Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs operates solely off donations. 100 percent of the money raised goes to the hunts, and covers 100 percent of the costs incurred; the hunter pays nothing. The group is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, so contributions are tax deductible. Please visit nvoutdoorsmen.org/donate and consider making a donation.



Chris Chapman

## ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

Matt and his team are doing really incredible things for really incredible people. It's a full-time job planning the NOW hunts each year, and they manage to get it done on top of their regular full-time jobs. At the core of NOW's success is, of course, the countless hours of hard work put forth by its volunteers, and the incredible donations of its partners and donors.

In the end, Matt believes the rewards are priceless: seeing the joy in a young hunter's eyes when he approaches his buck; instilling confidence in a young hunter's mind when she makes an impressive shot; and feeling the gracious approval in an old hunter's heart when they take a trophy Nevada bull, despite the added challenges of a wheelchair.

It truly makes a difference in people's lives.

And it's not just one hunt that stands out, either. When asked what his most memorable hunt with NOW was, Matt sums it up perfectly.

"Oh yeah, I have a hunt that stands out to me," he says. "Let's see, there was the hunt in 2011, then the hunt in 2012, then the hunt in 2013, then the hunt in 2014..."

Matt, along with all of the volunteers at NOW and anyone who has made a donation to the organization, has a good reason to be proud. They offer people in wheelchairs the chance of a lifetime. And with NOW's expert hunters leading the way, not even the notorious buck fever can thwart their mission.



Tony Sosby and Lizzy Pritchett






# PINOCCHIO'S BAR & GRILL SERVES UP JUST WHAT NORTHERN NEVADA NEEDS

No lie, it's where out of towners go to feel like locals.




STORY BY MEGG MUELLER
PHOTOS BY KIPPY S. SPILKER

Family dinners are something many of us have a memory of—a meal where everyone gathers around the table, all talking at once, sharing jokes and stories full of laughter and connection. It's a meal that is equal parts delicious, engaging, and memorable.

Now, take that meal and locate in an eccentric family member's house, you know the one who has a crazy fun collection of memorabilia and whimsy lining the walls—with a story for most of it—and you're getting close to the experience of dining at Pinocchio's Bar & Grill.

John (JP to just about everyone) and Barbara Pinocchio opened their first restaurant in Reno in 1997, have since moved to a larger location and added a second restaurant in 2006 in Sparks to accommodate what they call their growing family. It's family that is at the heart of everything they do, and if you dine at Pinocchio's you become part of that family.




Jillian and JP Pinocchio

COURTESY OF PINOCCHIO'S

## COMMUNITY MATTERS

"When we opened at Moana Lane, we had four young kids," JP says. "If we only had one table busy, I'd call her and say 'you gotta come down here so we look busy.' Then we'd get busy and all the tables would be booked, and I'd say 'you gotta come down here and help.' The kids would go in the office and sleep, and she'd get working."

The Pinocchios weren't gluttons for punishment, starting a restaurant with so many little kids at home, but the timing presented itself and the original plan was to have a small restaurant with the focus on a catering business. But Pinocchio's became something of a local favorite, with people returning over and over for JP's dishes and the chance to spend some time in the restaurant that became known almost as much for its décor as its tasty food.

"When we opened, we had about four pictures and it drove me nuts because it seemed so plain Jane," JP explains. "I started going to every garage sale and yard sale and she'd throw 90 percent of it away, and hang the rest. Then I got into old Reno history stuff, and now we've got Harold's Club items, Houlihan's booths, Liberty Bell stuff, and things from Vario's."

The homage to some of Reno's historic eateries is part of the sense of community that runs so strongly through John, Barbara, and their daughter Jillian, the only one of the couple's four children who took to the restaurant business. For all three, Pinocchio's is almost a second home and the people who come in are more than just customers.

Frisco burger



Big-ass salad

## FAMILY MEALS

The inspiration behind the menu is fairly simple, JP says.

"Food to me is a couple things. It's about the atmosphere and the conversation; it's something you share. We still to this day, every Sunday, have family dinner. Around the table you make memories and everlasting relationships."

Currently, the menu is using what they call "The New Normal" menu, which is a truncated version of the normally massive menu. But all the choices still follow JP's premise of serve fresh food only.

"We don't do anything premade. We fresh grind our turkey and our hamburger. We try to give everyone a variety, and we serve a larger portion because I eat!" he says.

Jillian expands on her dad's philosophy: "People come in and say 'oh, I thought you were an Italian restaurant.' They ask why the restaurant is called Pinocchio's and they don't really believe us that it's our last name," she says with a laugh. "We definitely have some Italian flare, like we're known for our lasagna and we make great spaghetti and meatballs, but we're an American-Italian restaurant. We're pretty well-known for our smoked meats—our ribs, prime rib, our tri-tips. It's a family restaurant where you can get something for everyone. "

Giant burgers, a "big-ass salad," tasty sandwiches, and pizzas add to the pastas and steaks, along with daily specials that can tempt even the most diehard Pinocchio's fan away from their favorites. Well, maybe.

"Our menu can be a little handcuffed sometimes because our customers eat the same thing every time they come in. Most of them come in for one thing and one thing only," Jillian says.

## CUSTOMERS COUNT

When the pandemic hit, and restaurants were forced to close, it threw the Pinocchios for a loop, needless to say.









## MOM'S ON THE RUN

Since 1999, Barbara and JP have hosted the annual Mom's on the Run, a 5k walk and 5k/10k fun run. The event, which is now the largest race of its kind in northern Nevada, has humble beginnings.

"It's in memory of my sister Debra, and her generosity," Barbara explains.

Debra and Barbara were avid runners, and when Debra died of breast cancer, Barbara took to running even more as a way to honor her sister. She told JP she wanted to start a run, and figured they'd get a handful of friends and head out the door of the restaurant and just do a run. The hope was maybe they'd raise $1,000 to give to someone suffering from the same disease. They raised $100,000 that year.

"This was going to be our 20th year, but we're doing a virtual run-walk instead," Barbara says. "We've made a lot of money and we've spent a lot of money, about $50,000-$60,000 a month we spend on women. We've helped a few thousand women and all of it stays local to northern Nevada."

"Mom's on the Run pays for utilities, car insurance, mortgages, rent...things like that. It's for the women who are going through treatment," Jillian says.

JP notes that 97-98 cents of every dollar earned goes to the patients.

"I don't think it would be what it is without the restaurant because that's where we started talking about it, it's where we advertise it, and it's our customers. We had a big push from our loyal customers," Barb says.

To date, the organization has raised more than $4.5 million and despite this year's setback, shows no sign of stopping.

"We go back to the western spirit," JP says. "You never had to ask your neighbor to help you come plow, and we have some of that cowboy spirit in us. We saw a problem, so we helped."

momsontherun.info




"It's been a learning experience every day. It caught me off guard. I'm pretty conservative so I always knew there could come a time when I'd have to put back into the business, but I never had a plan to go to zero," JP says.

The shutdown hit the family financially and emotionally, and the struggle to regain some footing under the mandates presented proved to be a challenge but the family came together, decided to close the Sparks location temporarily (it has since reopened), and began doing curbside pickup from the Reno location. While a difficult pivot, all three are quick to note an unexpected positive outcome.

"When we opened for curbside and the support that we had," Barbara says, pausing, "...it was very emotional to me. The support we had from our regular customers; well it was really cool."

"I'm not sure a lot of good has come out of this, but we have a really great local customer base and the relationships...we've gotten to get to know them even better," Jillian adds. "It's just been amazing. We had people driving across town to pick up food every day."

For JP, it was anything but business as usual.

"I've always felt like I can navigate through anything and I'll come out ok, and this one's hog tied me in a lot of ways. If we weren't as old as we are, and didn't have the loyal support of our community, I don't think we would have made it," he says. "A lot of great restaurants closed. It's sad. But I love our business and I love our customers and I could just not imagine not doing this."

## THE NEXT GENERATION

Eventually, however, JP and Barbara do plan to step back a bit and let Jillian take over. Due to the pandemic, that plan got delayed.

"The plan was going to be in the next three to four years we were going to pull back a bit and she was going to take the front seat," JP says. "But in these times we've put some of our retirement back in, so it might be a little longer."

For those used to seeing JP and Barbara, don't fret, though. Jillian believes her dad will never be far from the restaurant.

"His retirement plan," she says smiling, "means he'll only be here four to five hours a day. But I get it. You have to love what you do. You couldn't do this if you didn't love it. Our restaurant is our family."

***JOIN THE FAMILY***

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pinocchiosbarandgrill.com

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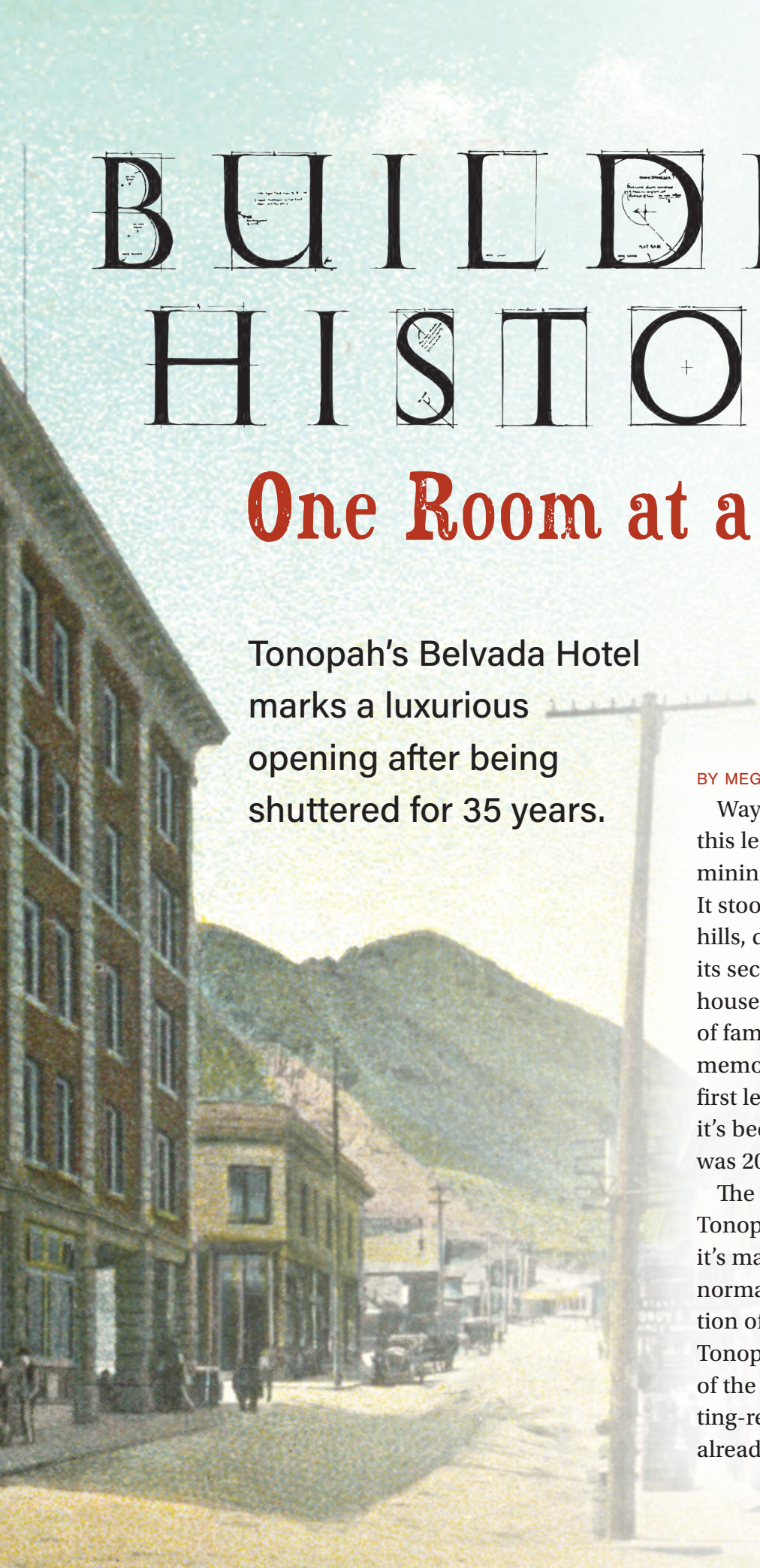
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# BUILDING HISTORY

## One Room at a Time

Tonopah's Belvada Hotel marks a luxurious opening after being shuttered for 35 years.



BY MEGG MUELLER

Way back in days of yore there was this legendary building in a historic mining town that begged to be visited. It stood sentinel, high in the desert hills, doors shuttered for decades, with its secrets locked forever inside. It once housed the riches of miners, the homes of families, and eventually, their faded memories. I can barely recall when I first learned of this forgotten treasure… it's been so many years now. I believe it was 2018, if memory serves.

The lure of the Belvada Hotel in Tonopah is so encompassing, I swear it's made time pass more slowly than normal. In April 2018, during a convention of rural tourism partners held in Tonopah, we were given a sneak peak of the recently purchased, just-getting-repairs-underway building and already I was smitten.




The Belvada building, early 1900s

CENTRAL NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## BACK IN THE DAY

The grand structure—which sits kitty-corner from town's other grand structure, The Mizpah Hotel—was completed in 1906 and the State Bank and Trust Co. became the first occupant in 1907. Thanks to a large, unsecured investment that went badly however, the bank closed its doors just four months later.

In 1908, the swanky Nevada Club Saloon opened its doors in a portion of the building, while the First National Bank of Nevada took over the previous bank's quarters. Until the 1930s, the building housed numerous retail operations, including a barber shop in the basement that was dubbed "One of the most luxurious tonsorial establishments between Denver and San Francisco." Once the

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NEVADA
MAGAZINE

Telling the Silver State's story since 1936.

Depression hit, Tonopah saw many businesses close and the building that housed that fine barber shop went dark.

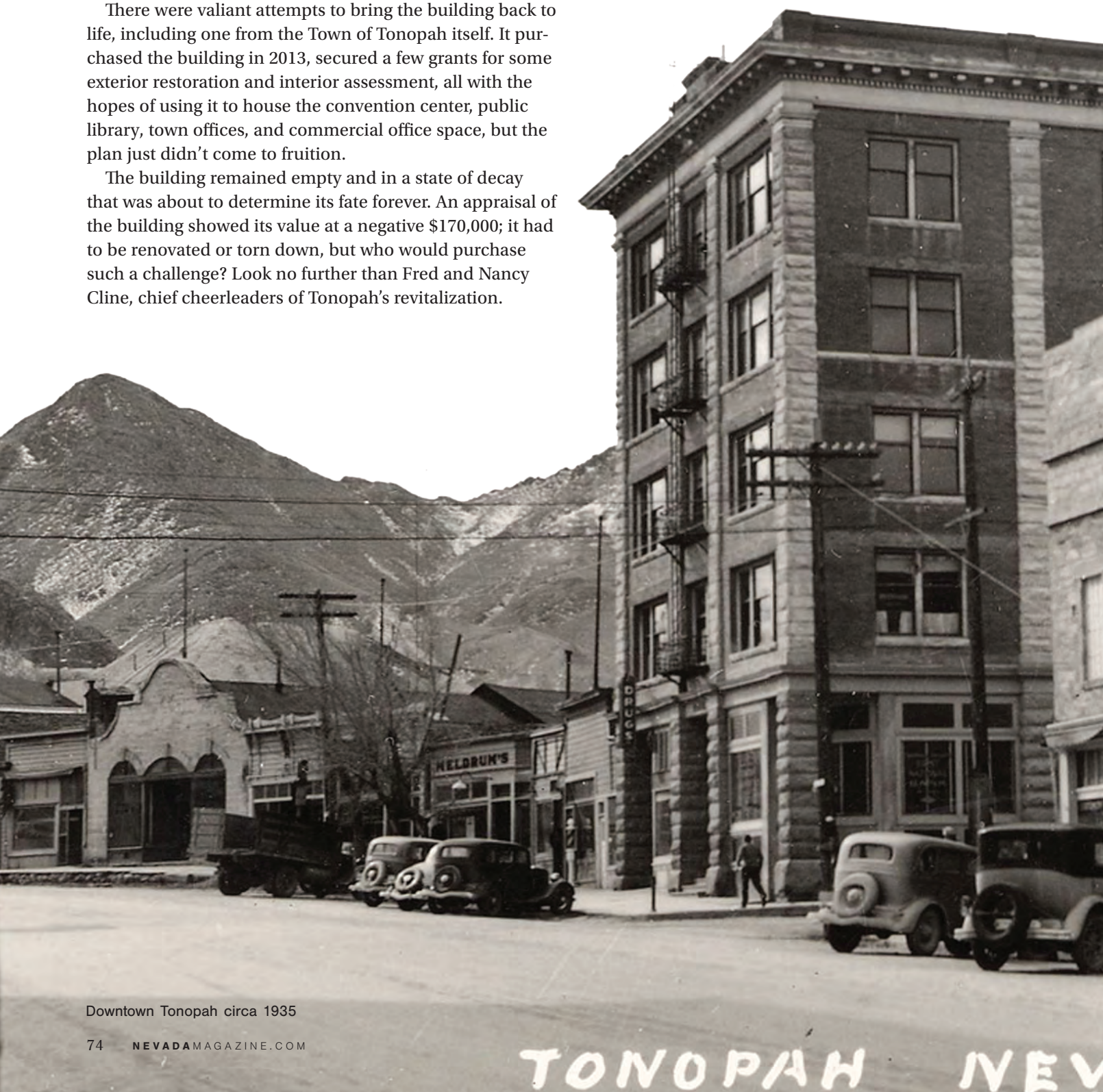
The late 1970s saw a resurgence of Tonopah's mining operations when molybdenum—used in steel alloys—was discovered nearby and the town boomed once again. The empty bank building was recast as the Belvada Apartments, but just a decade later, the boom went bust as it so often does and in 1985, the Belvada shut its doors again. It would be 35 years before they reopened.

There were valiant attempts to bring the building back to life, including one from the Town of Tonopah itself. It purchased the building in 2013, secured a few grants for some exterior restoration and interior assessment, all with the hopes of using it to house the convention center, public library, town offices, and commercial office space, but the plan just didn't come to fruition.

The building remained empty and in a state of decay that was about to determine its fate forever. An appraisal of the building showed its value at a negative $170,000; it had to be renovated or torn down, but who would purchase such a challenge? Look no further than Fred and Nancy Cline, chief cheerleaders of Tonopah's revitalization.

## ONE MORE TIME

In 2011, the Clines revamped and reopened The Mizpah Hotel, which had sat empty for a decade. California natives, Nancy discovered deep Nevada roots when she learned her uncle was a prospector who came to Tonopah in 1900 and owned a saloon, while her grandmother was the postmistress of Goldfield. The Clines now have their hearts squarely lodged in Nevada.




Downtown Tonopah circa 1935




UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



Nancy and Fred Cline

"Tonopah literally represents an opportunity for us to honor our heritage, as well as the heritage of Nevada," Nancy says. "I have learned so much about the tenacity and perseverance of the generation that came west in search of gold and a better life."

The challenge of reopening a 1906 hotel was a lot, but The Mizpah is today incredibly popular and has been a success by all accounts. When the City of Tonopah offered the Clines the Belvada building for $1, with a caveat or two about its restoration, Fred and Nancy had their reservations but it was an opportunity to continue the renovation of Tonopah to its former grandeur. They said yes.

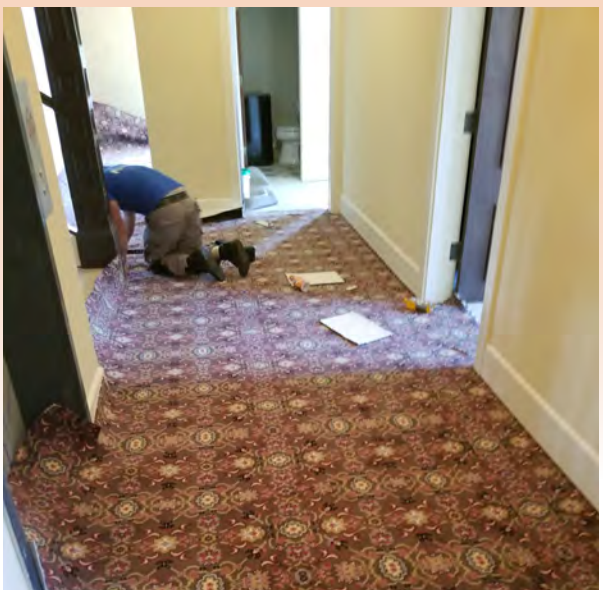
> "Tonopah literally represents an opportunity for us to honor our heritage, as well as the heritage of Nevada."
>
> —Nancy Cline

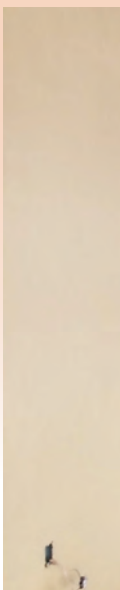
The Belvada was designed by the same architect—George E. Holesworth—that designed The Mizpah, the Goldfield Hotel, and the John S. Cook Bank in Rhyolite. The Belvada, Mizpah, and Goldfield Hotel are all on the National Register of Historic Places. The Belvada was built with a Neo-classical influence, and retained many of its original features, albeit in very run down condition when the Clines signed on.

First order of business was basically stripping the interior down to the studs. I was fortunate enough to take a tour of the building during this process; in May 2018, Associate Editor Eric Cachinero and I headed back to Tonopah to take a tour of the coming property from the Cline's eldest son, Ramsey. Ramsey is the man-on-the-ground in Tonopah, opening the Mizpah Club next to the hotel, and he was also instrumental in the Old Brewery Hostel the Clines opened adjacent to The Mizpah.

Ramsey shared the future plans for the Belvada with us, as we gingerly walked the original staircase, and skirted workmen as they took down the rotting walls and pulled up the failing floors. The original elevator was still there, but not quite ready for use, so as we moved along the five floors, Ramsey painted a mental picture of the building's future. Each floor would have just 10 rooms, some potentially apartments depending on







what the market required, he told us. The building would have to be basically rebuilt, with new subfloors and new walls. Then Nancy would step in and choose carpeting, drapes, and bedding. The first floor would someday house a coffee shop, elegant retail spaces, and a meeting area large enough for weddings and conferences. The basement, Ramsey continued, would one day be home to a speakeasy, potentially called the Boiler Room, a nod to the building's original boiler which still exists in one piece. The basement can be accessed from the street, via a slightly hidden stairway down and there are glass tiles in the sidewalk that provide a very cool ambiance. I could see the rich furnishings Ramsey spoke of, the cozy dark bar that would serve premium cocktails in a hushed but lively environment. I couldn't wait.

Work on the hotel has continued since our visit in 2018, with a few delays here and there as most construction projects have. The pandemic posed a few hiccups as well, such as delays in the almost entirely U.S.-sourced items Nancy found to decorate the property, but by the time this issue is on newsstands, the property will be ready for visitors. Eric and I were invited to be the first guests of the property in late November 2020, and needless to say, we jumped at the chance.

## A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES

We drive to Tonopah to meet with John McCormick, the general manager of The Mizpah, who is heavily assisting the Clines with the Belvada's renovations. John leads us into the lobby of the new hotel, and all I can do is gasp. The windows are still covered with brown paper (curious onlookers have been a slight distraction) but the pressed metal ceilings, sumptuous furnishings, beautiful flooring, and rich, elegant feel has me ready to sit and bask in some early-1900s glory. But that will have to wait.

The newly-refurbished elevator beckons, and John directs us to the fifth floor. As we step into the landing, historical photos of Tonopah greet us, as does the warmth of the décor. John notes that Nancy is the mastermind behind the Belvada's warm, elegant feel, saying her choices are felt on every item, down to the choice of Italian espresso makers and labels for the toiletries. Nancy has managed to make the hotel feel luxurious without feeling stuffy or haughty. The 40 rooms are decorated in rich shades of gold, wine, and blue, each with intricate bathroom tiling. The rooms include suites, double queens, and even some with kitchenettes for those looking for a longer stay. Nancy admits later over dinner that she and Fred wondered if the town needed two luxury hotels, and says if it is a better fit, there are some rooms ready to be converted to apartments. They are committed to the town's success, not just their hotels.

We wander the floors with John, checking out each type of room available, noting the refinished elevator, grand staircase that is now richly carpeted while the beautiful wood balustrades gleam in the light. The spacious, well-lit hallways harken back to an earlier time, when every inch of space wasn't crammed with a tiny room or closet; the Belvada invites deep breaths with its visual elegance and careful appointments.

At the aforementioned dinner at The Mizpah's Pittman Café, Fred and Nancy talk about the challenge of taking on the project, which was unlike The Mizpah in that the Belvada never was used as a hotel, not to mention the number of years it sat in disrepair. When $1 sale price comes up, I note what a bargain they got. They agree, but also mention that in order to bring the hotel up to code and safety standards, not to mention their exacting design and decorating requirements, the hotel has taken about $3 million dollars to renovate, and as yet, the speakeasy of Ramsey's dreams is not yet complete. They hope that will be open in the spring. Adjacent the gorgeous lobby there will be a coffee shop, featuring various coffee drinks, pastries, and sandwiches, and on the other end of the building, the once-famous Nevada Club has been beautifully redone as a meeting space.





Photos of the Belvada during its renovation.

For me, I look forward to my night's stay and I'm not disappointed. The rooms are comfortable and beautiful. I want for nothing as I look out over the town, and think of the people who once stood in this window before me. My bed is soft, with luxurious bedding, and with all the amenities, from flatscreen TV to ample charging stations, perfect lighting and a spotless bathroom, I know I'm luckier than most as I revel in my surroundings.

The task of taking on the Belvada is not one the Clines had planned for, but as I watch the two of them rearrange pillows in the lobby just so, or speak of details so seemingly minute other hoteliers would simply overlook them, you can see that this has become another labor of love for the couple. The experience they hope to give their customers can be felt in every corner of the Belvada, and it extends to the experience they hope people have when they visit Tonopah. The views of the historic mining park, the other 1900s buildings on the main street, and the small-town hospitality you experience wherever you go, all speak to the tangible dream of Tonopah's revitalization. The Clines know this, and as they work to open their second hotel in their adopted state, I hope they feel proud of their efforts and maybe just a little sorry for the dilemma I now face. I am a huge fan of The Mizpah and now the Belvada has stolen my heart. Where will I stay when I come to town?





### DISCOVER THE RICHES

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PHOTOS: MEGG MUELLER AND ERIC CACHINERO

# BOOM TOWN

## ART, CULTURE, GAMING, AND BREWPUBS BRING EXCITEMENT BACK TO DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS.

BY RYAN SLATTERY

### *"IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME."*

Lifting a line from the 1989 baseball film classic "Field of Dreams" is fitting when talking about Downtown Las Vegas these days. Especially when it comes to sports-loving Derek Stevens, a Fremont Street titan who in October 2020 opened Circa Resort & Casino, an adults-only resort and the first newly constructed property to be built in Downtown Las Vegas in four decades.

Stevens has a reputation of betting big—both on his casino properties and the games played on the field—so it's not all that surprising that he calls Circa "a sports book so big we built a casino around it."






COURTESY CIRCA RESORT & CASINO

His boast isn't much of a stretch. Sports viewing takes center stage at Circa. The resort contains a massive three-level sports book with private boxes. But it's hardly the only place on the property to watch a game in this sports-hungry city. A year-round pool complex called Stadium Swim features a tiered six-pool amphitheater facing a 40-foot-tall high-def screen, and there are televisions seemingly everywhere in the casino, including a large bank of flat screens above the 165-foot Mega Bar, the longest indoor bar in Nevada.

"Whether guests are placing a bet in the book or at the greatest pool in the world, we've made a point to modernize the sports experience," Stevens explains. "We created two of the most unique spots to catch a game in Vegas."

What Stevens did with Circa was modernize vintage Vegas, while embracing its past. Honoring the Golden Gate Hotel & Casino, which he also owns, he brought back the 99-cent shrimp cocktail serving the simple, original 1959 recipe at Saginaw's Delicatessen, one of the resort's five restaurants. He also saved Glitter Gulch favorite Vegas Vickie from spending her days in the Neon Boneyard.

"She was ready for some much-needed rest and relaxation," Stevens jokes of the neon sign of a kicking cowgirl, which now sits over a lounge named after her. "The intent all along was to bring Vickie back. We wanted to respect the history of Las Vegas."

It wasn't easy giving the 22-foot-tall Vegas Vickie a complete makeover. The paint was stripped to the bare metal and repainted, all of the neon glass tubing was replaced and her hydraulic leg kick has gone mechanical. Good news for Vickie's aging 40-year-old joints.

As owner of The D Las Vegas, Golden Gate, and now Circa, Stevens has brought a freshness to the casino experience under the Fremont Street canopy. He introduced outdoor bars, dancing dealers, and created Garage Mahal, a transit hub for ride-sharing companies with dedicated pick-up and drop-off lanes. He's, in essence, built a Strip-worthy destination resort in the very place where gambling in Las Vegas was born.




Vegas Vickie

PHOTOS: COURTESY CIRCA RESORT & CASINO

# House - Social Media




PHOTOS: COURTESY CIRCA RESORT & CASINO

Circa is being praised by those running the Fremont Street Experience—which is celebrating its 25th anniversary in December. The Viva Vision Light Show was upgraded within the past year and is now seven times brighter. Circa is seen as another opportunity in attracting people to Fremont Street.

"Circa is a game changer for Downtown," says Paul McGuire, chief marketing officer for the Fremont Street Experience. "Circa was built to delight and amaze the senses."

But while the sparkle and shine of Circa garners much of the attention (the new gem stands like a giant beacon over the downtown skyline), Fremont Street isn't the only neighborhood in "old Las Vegas" that has seen a true transformation.

Over the past decade Downtown Las Vegas has witnessed a rebirth. Artist colonies have popped up and thrived. Beatnik coffee shops, cafes, bars, and thrift stores have opened. Culture arrived when The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, the Discovery Children's Museum, Mob Museum, and Neon Museum all debuted in 2012, and locals continue to flock to First Friday for art, music, food, and fun. Las Vegas has created a downtown with character and charm.

## ARTS DISTRICT

Not long ago, a couple years at most, South Main Street was a strip of rundown buildings. Landscaping and infrastructure improvements, including rerouting traffic to make South Main Street a one-way thoroughfare, plus a little TLC has turned a dusty, forgotten street into the latest hotspot for locals, who now gather here to socialize.





Strolling down South Main takes guests past ReBar, a bar inside an antique store where everything from the artwork to the chairs are for sale. Across the street is Velveteen Rabbit, a craft cocktail lounge. A few more steps and patrons arrive at Casa Don Juan where quesadillas, burritos, and enchiladas are paired with tart margaritas. Then there's the ever-growing brewpub scene in the Arts District with Hop Nuts Brewing, Nevada Brew Works, HUDL Brewing Company, Able Baker Brewing, CraftHaus Brewery, Beer District Brewing, and Three Sheets Craft Beer Bar, all within a half-mile walk of one another.

Mixed among the artist murals and bars on South Main are a number of art galleries, a yoga studio, tattoo parlor, antique stores, and vintage clothing shops with names like Main Street Peddlers, Modern Mantiques, Atomic Style Lounge, and Buffalo Exchange. With the improvements complete, owners of these businesses are seeing increased foot traffic and turning window shoppers into buyers.

"The renovations have restored the old-school charm and glamour of Las Vegas that made it so alluring all those decades ago," says Tammy Treat, store manager at Buffalo Exchange. "The area is so full of history and art. With an influx of visitors in recent years, the place is buzzing with renewed excitement again. We're excited to be a part of that."




BUFFALO EXCHANGE




PHOTOS: RYAN SLATTERY




## FREMONT EAST

For many years there wasn't much of a reason to venture out from under the Fremont Street Experience canopy. Crossing Las Vegas Boulevard was, to some, a risky endeavor. But when the city carved out a six-block area called the Fremont East Entertainment District, things changed. It's now a lively scene dotted with bars, a speakeasy, burger joints, pizza parlors, and entertainment venues.



LE THAI/CIERRA PEDRO



Dan Coughlin, owner of Le Thai, was among the first to take the leap of faith when he opened in 2011.

"Downtown is always the heartbeat of any city, and ours back then was still pretty bare," Coughlin recalls. "We were always hanging out Downtown at places like The Griffin and Downtown Cocktail Room, and I was like, 'Man, there's not a lot of restaurants down here. There needs to be a little bit of food mixed in.' That's how it started."

Being part of Downtown's resurgence from the get-go was "an easy decision," says Coughlin, who just opened an Asian-themed restaurant called 8 East inside Circa. "We've seen the whole Downtown transformation from the beginning. We want Downtown to become a destination. We want everyone to succeed. This is our home."

## DOWNTOWN PROJECT

When the late Zappos guru Tony Hsieh founded the Downtown Project in 2012, he promised to move his online retail empire into the old Las Vegas City Hall and infuse $350 million into the blighted city core. There was skepticism on what exactly that meant, but Hsieh shot down critics saying he saw the potential of creating a walkable, "live and play" downtown with a sense of neighborhood and community.

Hsieh's Downtown Project scooped up roughly 60 acres of land for $200 million and invested millions more in attracting tech startups and small businesses including retail shops, bars, and restaurants. They backed the Life is Beautiful music festival, which saw immediate success attracting big-name acts like The Killers, Foo Fighters, Snoop Dogg, Kacey Musgraves, Duran Duran, and Post Malone, before the pandemic cancelled this year's festival.

In the years that followed, the Gold Spike casino was turned into an interactive bar and playground for 20-somethings; the quaint Downtown Container Park sprung up with its fire-shooting praying mantis guarding the entrance; and dozens of restaurants and bars such as Commonwealth, Eat, The Smashed Pig, Oak & Ivy, Vanguard Lounge, and VegeNation opened.



Downtown Container Park

RYAN SLATTERY

***EXPERIENCE***

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Around the same time, Stevens was flipping Fitzgeralds Hotel and Casino into The D Las Vegas, renovations were underway at the Plaza Hotel & Casino, Boyd Gaming was upgrading its downtown properties, and a number of museums opened. Then this past September, Downtown Grand unveiled a new 495-room guest tower.

While there was never a truly organized city-run effort, as a collective the efforts of individuals and visionaries like the Downtown Project, casino operators, restaurateurs, shop owners, artists and creatives of all types helped reshape Downtown Las Vegas.

"A lot of people have been doing things," explains David Schwartz, gaming historian and UNLV professor. "It's good to have a viable alternative to The Strip. It's a huge positive for Las Vegas."



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# Esther's Kitchen



## This is the neighborhood Italian restaurant Las Vegas has been waiting for.

BY CLAIRE WHITE

Walking into Esther's Kitchen right before dinner service begins in the 18b Arts District of Las Vegas, one is struck immediately with a sense of community. The staff is finishing a wine tasting. They are sampling the latest additions to the ever-changing menu in an affable, almost familial scene. But it's more than that. Even the walk up to the restaurant along Casino Center Boulevard has a community feel that differs from three years ago when Esther's Kitchen first opened.



CLAIRE WHITE




CLAIRE WHITE

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION



Executive Chef James Trees

The 18b area was set aside in 1998 as a creative zone, right in between the north Strip and historic Downtown Las Vegas. As First Friday introduced artistic Las Vegans to the nascent neighborhood in the early 2000s and urban revitalization began to shift the surrounding area, 18b became a hip place for arts, antiques, and coffee shops. But as Esther's Kitchen's Executive Chef James Trees recalls, when he drove around the area for the first time in 2016, he felt that it was still missing a vital component—a neighborhood restaurant that served brunch, lunch, and dinner.

"One of the hardest things to find when I was looking for a place to build a restaurant was a neighborhood," James explains. He and his sister drove all around town looking for a place that felt right. The feel of 18b as well as its central location between a number of beautiful historical neighborhoods and the growing commercial corridor of Downtown seemed perfect.

His vision was a soulful, homey neighborhood Italian spot.

"When I came back from L.A.," he says, "Las Vegas was a town of two and a half million people without any real neighborhood restaurants."

Esther's Kitchen was a homecoming for James, a Las Vegas native who attended Las Vegas High School before entering the kitchen at the Mirage. James' Great Aunt Esther, his restaurant's namesake, helped pay for his tuition to the Culinary Institute of America in New York. After finishing his culinary coursework, he came back to Las Vegas where he worked as a sous chef at Michel Mina's Aqua. He went on to work at a series of Mina's restaurants in Las Vegas before relocating to Southern California, settling in Los Angeles for a decade. James moved back to Las Vegas to create Esther's Kitchen, which opened its doors in January 2018.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PEOPLE...

In 2019, James was recognized by "Vegas Inc" in its 40 Under 40. Last year he was one of two Las Vegas chefs selected as a finalist for the James Beard Foundation's prestigious Best Chef Southwest award. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the James Beard Foundation later decided not to announce winners at that year's awards program, but even a nomination is an incredible honor for any chef or restaurant.

These accolades, as well as the long list of celebrity chefs who James has worked with makes some aspects of the dining experience at Esther's Kitchen all the more remarkable. The first surprising thing is the price point.

There are plates of pasta starting at $16 and bottles of wine at $40. The other revelation is how well the staff takes the idea of a neighborhood restaurant to heart. James said that in his first round of hiring, he selected

*"Las Vegas was a town of two and a half million people without any real neighborhood restaurants."*

"the nicest people who showed up," and that is exactly how one would describe his warm, attentive wait staff and bartenders.

## ...AND THE FOOD

The menu features comforting classics such as cacio e pepe, spaghetti pomodoro, and margherita pizza. But the real stars are the seasonal offerings. The section of the menu titled "Dishes of the Moment" features fresh, seasonal ingredients crafted into inventive small plates and appetizers. The entrees also change seasonally, and James and his team care deeply about the quality of ingredients.



CLAIRE WHITE

Any proper dinner at Esther's begins with house-made sourdough bread. Besides the obligatory butter, olive oil, and sea salt, Esther's bread can be paired with a variety of spreads and accompani-



"It's all about eating what's good when it's good."

ments. The fegatini with balsamic and strawberry is a delightful surprise to those uninitiated in the joys of pâté—smoky, sweet, and decadent. The burrata with chives and sea salt is possibly a bit more basic but is just as satisfying on the warm, fresh bread.

Another recommended starter is the ricotta gnudi, a perennial menu item. The gnudi, which are gnocchi-like dumplings filled with luscious ricotta, are balanced perfectly by beets and sorrel in a bright, herbaceous sauce. Each of the individual ingredients seem to come together in an almost perfect demonstration of Chef Trees' fresh, farm-to-table style.

Although the brunch and lunch menus rightfully differ from the dinner service, patrons will find the aforementioned classic pastas and pizzas are offered at all hours. Each season introduces a revamped menu. Chef Trees is not worried that people will fret over the loss of a favorite menu item. He wants to buy what is in season, and he wants to make the freshest dishes he can.

"A lot of the menu rotates," he says, "And everyone who is pushing tomatoes when they are out of season is missing the point of Italian food. It's all about eating what's good when it's good."



Burrata salad






PHOTOS (TOP): CLAIRE WHITE







## HOME MEANS

With all of his success, and the numerous kitchens and communities Chef Trees has called home, it might seem surprising that he still talks and acts like a Las Vegas native. He prides himself on treating everyone with respect and hospitality, from his chefs to his customers. The beverage team works together to craft a collaborative seasonal cocktail menu, and the kitchen staff is empowered to participate in the creative process for developing the perfect noodle for each new pasta dish. The reliance on local talent does not stop in the kitchen; the restaurant uses pottery serving dishes made by Clay Art Las Vegas.

Because of the success of Esther's Kitchen, Chef Trees has been able to expand his vision of hospitality and fresh, seasonal ingredients to other parts of the Las Vegas Valley. He is in the process of modifying Ada's at Tivoli Village into Ada's Wine Bar, a casual Spanish-inspired spot with tapas and wine by the glass. But he hasn't forgotten the neighborhood that made his first vision possible. Next door to Esther's, he will soon open a pasta shop and specialty grocery that will allow them to expand their bread-making operation as well as offer meal kits and other fun surprises.

Speaking of meal kits, they were a big part of the Esther's Kitchen workflow during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. When restaurants were ordered to close in March 2020, Chef Trees knew he wanted to keep as many employees on the payroll for as long as possible. At first he put the team to work with cleaning and a few upgrades to the facility. Then he partnered with the Secret Burger team to offer make-at-home meal kits that could be reserved online and picked up at the restaurant.

"We had so many people who wanted to come to the restaurant, and they just couldn't because we were closed," James explains, "So I decided I want somebody to be able to come, pick up a bag of food, take it to their house, not have to pick up a knife, and cook—start to finish—a four-course meal."

The first week the restaurant made 170 meal kits, 20 of which were available at no cost for first responders and out-of-work hospitality workers. They sold out in less than two hours, so the following week they tried for 220 kits and had the same response. This allowed James to reinstate more and more of his employees, and it also served as a fun way to research and develop new recipes for the main dining menu.

With the temporary closure behind them and the dining room open again for business, the menu is as inventive and as fresh as ever. When asked about his success, James first gave a nod to his wonderful team before expressing gratitude to the whole community for embracing his vision. And his final words imparted exactly the type of wisdom one would expect from their neighborhood Italian chef:

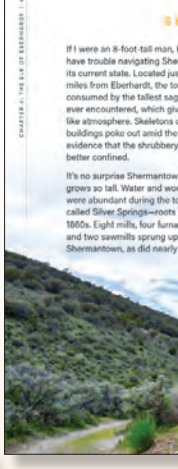
"One thing we never do here is take things for granted. We don't take a guest for granted. We don't take a tomato for granted. We don't do that."

### TASTE GREATNESS

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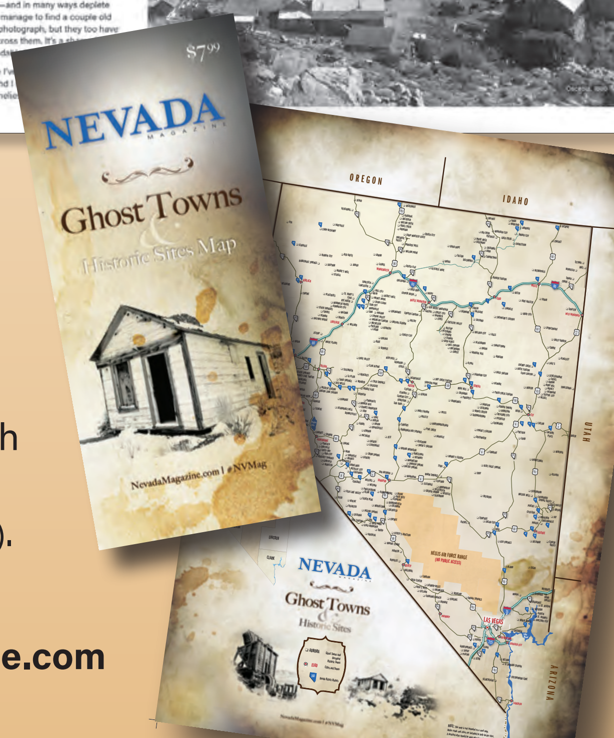




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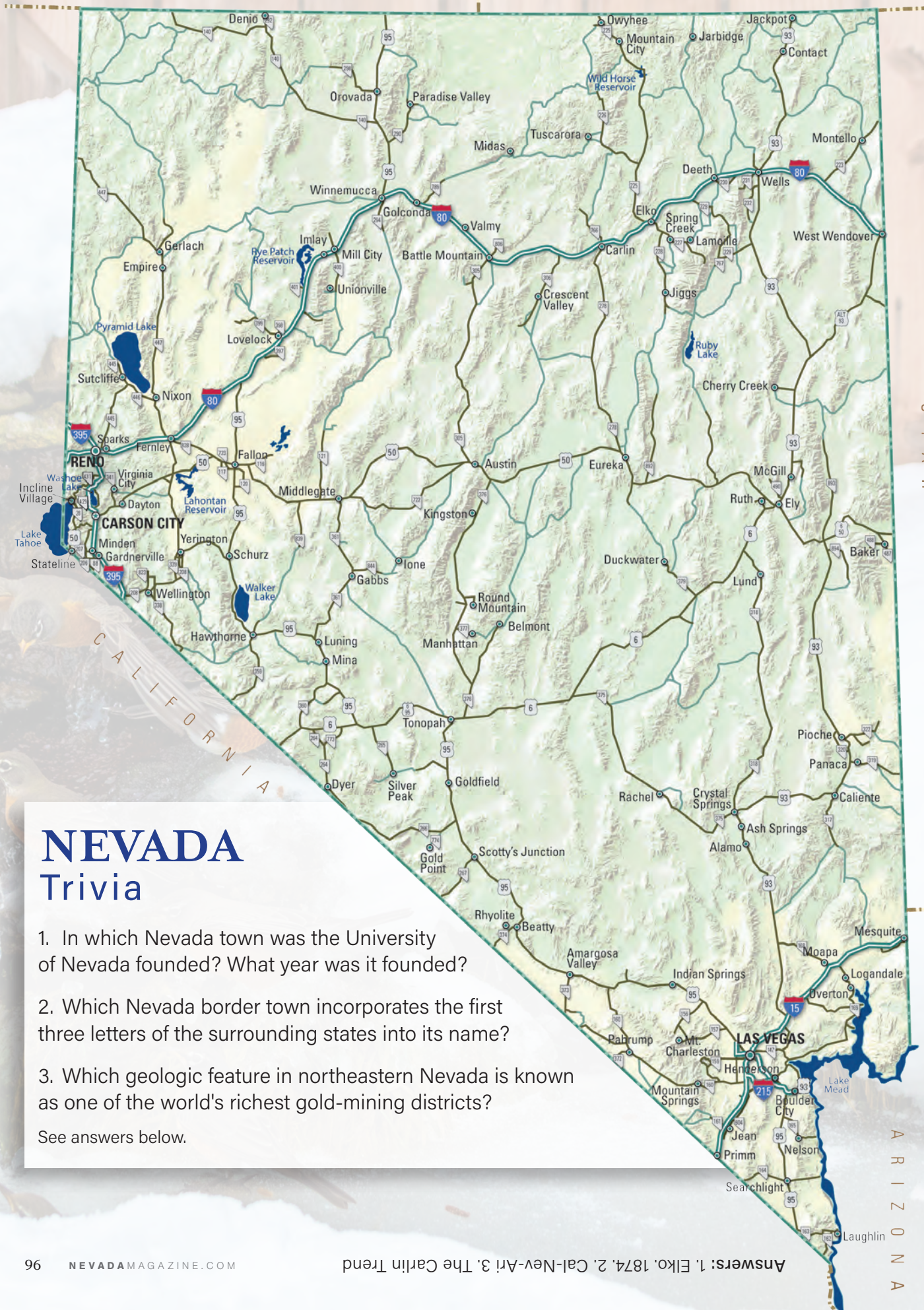





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# NEVADA
## Trivia

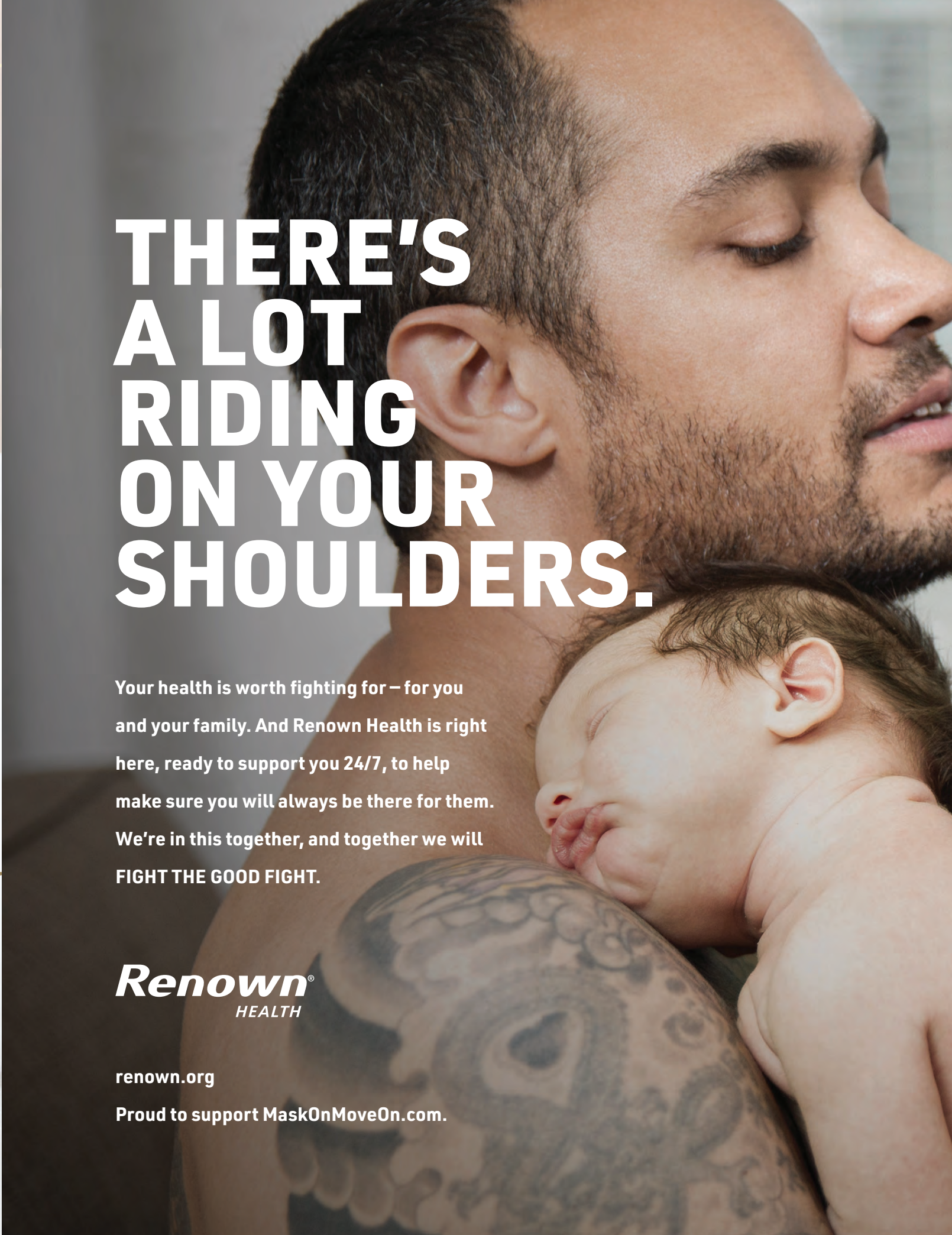
1. In which Nevada town was the University of Nevada founded? What year was it founded?

2. Which Nevada border town incorporates the first three letters of the surrounding states into its name?

3. Which geologic feature in northeastern Nevada is known as one of the world's richest gold-mining districts?

See answers below.

**Answers:** 1. Elko, 1874. 2. Cal-Nev-Ari 3. The Carlin Trend


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