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The truth is, you're only as good as your support. At Real Vegas, we are immensely grateful and appreciative of all our local readers! Without the contributors listed here, this publication would be next to impossible. This special feature issue is dedicated to our 2026 Top 10 Businesses and Professionals within various categories. We are honored to have had the opportunity to get to know and learn about these outstanding leaders and their respective businesses and organizations. These are truly innovative and hardworking individuals in our community!

This special feature is the result of our collective hard work, dedication, and passion. Every contribution to each issue is a labor of love from the bottom of our hearts. We proudly thank every advertiser, writer, photographer, and contributor in every way. Without you, we couldn't share these stories or provide rich content, including current events and the rich history of Las Vegas, which is extremely important to us.

Feel free to submit any editorial pieces for consideration to: [marketing@realvegasmagazine.com](mailto:marketing@realvegasmagazine.com). Don't forget to follow and like us on social media and visit our website: [realvegasmagazine.com](http://realvegasmagazine.com). We host many local Real Vegas community events and would love for you to join us! Stay tuned for information on our upcoming events, promoted and shared on social media.

THANK YOU all, we hope you enjoy reading Real Vegas as much as we enjoy creating it!

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# VEGAS NONSTOP

## When One Door Closes ... Another Opens

By Jonathan Scott & Melissa Redford

One of the great privileges of covering entertainment in Las Vegas is having a front-row seat to both beginnings and endings. In this town, marquee lights may dim, curtains may fall, and venues may close, but the creative spirit never stops. That's what makes Las Vegas special. Every ending is simply the setup for another opening act.

This season delivered plenty of memorable moments.

One of the highlights was producing our very first stadium concert event, Icons of Classic Rock, at the legendary Star of the Desert Arena inside Buffalo Bill's Resort in Primm. What a night it was. More than 3,000 happy music lovers gathered to celebrate the timeless songs of rock legends, performed by extraordinary musicians carrying on the legacy of bands including Survivor, Foreigner, Journey, and Boston.

The energy was electric. Fans sang every word, strangers became friends, and for a few hours the arena became a giant jukebox of memories.

What none of us realized at the time was that our concert would become one of the final major entertainment events before Primm Valley Resorts shut their doors. For decades, Primm welcomed travelers, families, concertgoers, and performers from around the world. We are proud to have sent it off with a standing ovation and thrilled at the opportunity to produce great shows with the new owners, Terrible's family and management team at the newly reopened Primm Valley Casino. Let's ROCK ON!

Of course, entertainment never stays still for long.

Soon afterward, we packed our bags and headed west to Southern California for our first BeachLife Festival experience in beautiful Redondo Beach. If you've never attended BeachLife, imagine world-class music, ocean breezes, great food, and thousands of smiling people all gathered just steps from the Pacific Ocean.

This year's lineup was a music lover's dream.

We enjoyed performances by Sugar Ray, Sheryl Crow, James Taylor, and Duran Duran, along with countless other talented



Producer Keith Thompson & Len Eckhaus  
*The Composers Showcase*



James Taylor

artists throughout the weekend. The festival delivered exactly what live music should deliver—great songs, great vibes, and unforgettable memories.

There is something magical about hearing a favorite song performed live while the sun sets over the ocean. It reminds you why music remains one of the most powerful forces connecting people of every age and background.

Back home in Las Vegas, our culinary calendar was equally impressive.

One of our favorite annual gatherings is Vegas Unstripped, the ultimate playground for local food lovers. Held poolside at Palms Casino Resort, the event showcased many of the city's most talented chefs, bartenders, and culinary innovators and food maven Eric Gladstone with Chef James Trees offering one of a kind tastings and Bordeaux Bob Cranston keeping our glasses full.



Everywhere you turned there was another delicious surprise waiting to be sampled. Creative small plates, inventive cocktails, decadent desserts, and plenty of opportunities to meet the passionate people behind the menus made for a spectacular evening.

Vegas has become one of the world's great food destinations, and events like Vegas Unstripped remind us why.

Speaking of great performances, we recently spent an evening enjoying Surf & Soul, a wonderful musical collaboration featuring some of our favorite friends.

The show reunited Beach Boys guitarist John Wedemeyer, Righteous Brothers vocalist Bucky Heard, and the incomparable Joey Melotti, longtime pianist and musical director for Barry Manilow. Together they created an evening filled with classic hits, great musicianship, and stories from decades spent on some of the world's biggest stages. That was truly a Real Vegas moment.

It was one of those intimate Las Vegas evenings where audiences leave feeling like they attended something truly special.

The local arts community also celebrated a significant milestone this season.

Congratulations are due to producer, songwriter, and tireless champion of original music Keith Thompson, who recently celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Composer's Showcase at The Smith Center for the Performing Arts.

For two decades, Keith has provided a platform for composers, lyricists, performers, and creative artists to present original works before live audiences. In a city often associated with tribute acts and legendary catalogs, Composer's Showcase has remained a beacon for new voices and original storytelling.

Twenty years is an extraordinary achievement in any business, but especially in entertainment. Bravo, Keith. Not every story this season was about anniversaries and celebrations.

We also said goodbye to one of Las Vegas entertainment's most beloved institutions.

Our friend Frank Marino took his final bow



Melissa, JS, Bucky Heard & Joey Melotti



Melissa Redford, Paul Shortino, Iggy Magnana, JS, Robin McAuley Icons of Classic Rock



Chef James Trees

with the closing of Divas, Drag & Drinks at Virgin Hotels Las Vegas. Frank's impact on Las Vegas entertainment cannot be overstated. For decades he entertained millions of visitors while helping define an entire genre of Las Vegas showroom entertainment.

Closing nights are emotional. There are hugs, tears, standing ovations, and countless memories shared backstage and in the audience. Yet even in those moments, there is gratitude. Gratitude for the laughter, the friendships, and the careers that were launched along the way.

As the old saying goes, when one door closes, another one opens.

That has certainly been true in Las Vegas.

New productions are being developed. New venues are opening. New artists are arriving every week with fresh ideas and ambitious dreams. The city's creative engine continues to move forward, powered by performers, producers, chefs, musicians, writers, and entrepreneurs who refuse to stop creating.

For us, that's what Vegas NonStop has always been about—celebrating the people who make this city extraordinary.

So whether you're opening a new show, closing a successful run, launching a restaurant, hosting a concert, producing a festival, or simply sharing your talents with the world, know that we're cheering for you.

Please keep those invitations coming.



Sheryl Crow

We love discovering new experiences, supporting our talented friends, and sharing your stories with our readers. After all, Las Vegas isn't just a city. It's a community of dreamers, risk-takers, and entertainers who continue to inspire us every day.

Until next time, we'll see you at the next concert, the next opening night, the next food festival, the next standing ovation, and hopefully somewhere in the middle of another unforgettable Vegas story.

Because in this town, the show may end...

...but the entertainment never stops.



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PAGE  
**10**



PAGE  
**12-13**



PAGE  
**16-17**

K Beauty Hype or Holy Grail..... 10

RealVegasEats | From HongKong to Las Vegas... With a Stop in Dubai..... 12-13

The Black Belt Effect: Why the Same People Keep Making the Top 10..... 16-17

2026 Top 10 Companies of Las Vegas..... 18-21

Tell us Your Real Story: Tammy Lier on Reinvention, Purpose and the Power of Finishing What You Start..... 46-51

The One-Hour Destination Wedding: Why Las Vegas Couples are Looking Beyond the Strip..... 56-57

Keeping an American Craft Alive, One Pair of Boots at a Time..... 52-53

The Two-Hour Reset at Virgin Hotels..... 60-61

Gladius the Show Brings World-Class Equestrian Entertainment to Las Vegas..... 62-63



PAGE  
**46-51**



PAGE  
**60-61**



# THE MILLION- DOLLAR MAN

*Remembering W. Larry Swecker...  
A Mentor, Friend, Community Builder  
and One-of-a-Kind Las Vegas*

By Candice Wiener

Some people leave an impression because of what they accomplished. Others leave one because of the way they made people feel.

Larry Swecker did both.

To many in Las Vegas, Larry was a respected CPA, trusted advisor, businessman, connector and longtime member of the community. To me, he became something much more personal: a mentor, a father figure, friend, an encourager, and someone who believed deeply in Real Vegas Magazine and the people behind it.

## **A million dollars every time**

And if you ever met Larry, chances are he gave you a million dollars.

Not a real one, of course.

Larry's business card was a novelty million-dollar bill, and no matter how many times I saw him, he would somehow manage to hand me another one. I could have had a stack of them already, and it didn't matter. The next time he saw me, there was another million dollars coming my way.

It was quintessential Larry...  
memorable, lighthearted and generous.

That is why, to me, he will always be The Million-Dollar Man.

I first met Larry at Chicago Brewing Company. From the beginning, there was an ease about him. He was positive, warm and genuinely interested in people.

He always seemed to have a smile on his face, and when he asked how things were going, he truly wanted to know.

Over time, Larry took a sincere interest in Real Vegas Magazine. He was a businessman himself, and I think that



*"It's been a pressure."*

experience gave him a special appreciation for what goes into building a publication; the relationships, the long hours, the constant effort, the belief required to keep pushing forward. He understood it. More importantly; he wanted to help.

Larry was the CPA for many local businesses, including Nora's Italian Cuisine, and one of the greatest gifts he gave me was a standing invitation to his weekly lunches at Nora's. They were held in the private room, and Larry always made it clear that I was welcome.

He would often say, "No worries if you're too busy at deadline."

But I always tried to make it whenever I could. Those lunches became something special.

Larry wanted people to sit down together, enjoy themselves, talk, connect and build relationships. He loved sharing the experience. He would encourage me to have a glass of wine, and when lunch was over, he would often tell me to take the bottle home. That was Larry.

Generous in ways both big and small.

He did not just tell people he supported them. He showed them.

Some of the most meaningful moments at those lunches came through the people Larry intentionally brought into the room. He wanted to connect me with individuals who could help broaden awareness of Real Vegas Magazine and support what we were building.

On several occasions, former U.S. Senator and Nevada Governor Richard Bryan joined us. During those lunches, Richard shared stories about my late grandfather, stories I had never heard before.





Those conversations meant more to me than Larry probably ever realized.

Larry also invited a banker who had once worked for my grandfather. Again, it was not random. Larry was making connections thoughtfully and deliberately. He was trying to connect pieces of my own history with my present and, in his way, help build the future of Real Vegas. He believed relationships mattered.

He believed community mattered.  
And he believed in helping people.

That instinct to support others extended far beyond me or the magazine. One of the things that became immediately clear whenever Larry spoke about his family was just how incredibly proud he was of them. His son. His daughter. His three granddaughters. All his family.

Larry would light up when he talked about them.

There was a noticeable change in his expression, that unmistakable pride of a father and grandfather who loved his family deeply and wanted everyone around him to know how special they were.

Larry was especially proud of both of his children. He celebrated his daughter Dawn for her many accomplishments, including graduating summa cum laude from the University of Arizona and earning her MBA from Northwestern University's prestigious Kellogg School of Management.

He was equally proud of her service in the Peace Corps in Guatemala, where she met the father of her beautiful twin daughters, Maya and Melinda, whom the family now affectionately calls Uncle Pete. Most of all, Larry was proud of the amazing, strong woman and mother Dawn had become. The family always wondered where she got all that motivation from!

Depending on who Larry was meeting, he wouldn't stop bragging about either Dawn or Michael... Really, whoever he thought the person might be able to help most in their endeavors. He was a forever helpful and thoughtful father in that way. Despite giving his children a world in which they believed anything they dreamed was possible, he was always looking for ways to do even more for them.

Looking back, I realize that was another example of who Larry was.

Even when he was proud of his son, his instinct was not simply to boast. It was to say: Look at the work being done. Look at the people being helped. Tell this story. That speaks volumes about him.

As Larry's health declined, our friendship took on a different meaning.

I went to the hospital a few times to see him and brought him things I thought he might like. They were small gestures compared to the many kindnesses he had shown me over the years, but I wanted him to know that the relationship mattered to me too.

Larry had spent so much time checking in on others, encouraging others and opening doors for others.

I wanted to check in on him. When Larry passed away at the beginning of this year, Las Vegas lost one of those people whose

## "Nice pom poms."

impact is difficult to quantify.

You cannot measure a person like Larry simply by business accomplishments, clients or titles. His real legacy lives in relationships. It lives in the people he introduced to one another. It lives in the businesses he advised. It lives in those Nora's lunches. It lives in the countless million-dollar bills he handed out with a smile. It lives in the stories people still tell about him. And most of all, it lives in his family.

After Larry passed, I had the opportunity to get to know his son Mike better, and I feel incredibly grateful that our connection to the Swecker family did not end with Larry's passing.

Mike graciously extended the standing invitation his father had always given me, and members of our Real Vegas team were honored to attend the family's most recent fundraising event. There is something profoundly meaningful about that continuity. A relationship Larry began has continued.

A door Larry opened remains open.

The community work he was so proud of continues. And the friendships he helped create are still growing. That, perhaps, is the greatest testament to a person's life. Larry was always trying to build something: a relationship, an introduction, an opportunity, a conversation, a connection. He was someone who made you feel that there was always room at the table.

And in a city that changes as quickly as Las Vegas does, people like Larry remind us of what creates a true community: relationships that span generations, businesses built on trust, people who know one another's families and a willingness to show up for each other. Larry showed up. For his clients. For his friends. For his community. For Real Vegas Magazine. And above everything else, for his family. I will always remember his positivity. His smile. His encouragement. His lunches. His introductions. His stories. And, of course, I will remember all those million-dollar bills. I wish I had still had every single one. But the truth is, Larry gave me something worth far more than that. He gave me his friendship, his mentorship and his belief. For that, I will always be grateful.

Larry Swecker may have been known to me as The Million-Dollar Man, but his real value could never be printed on a piece of paper. His legacy is in the lives he touched. And in Las Vegas, that legacy lives on.







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# A SEASON OF GRATITUDE, GROWTH & NEW BEGINNINGS

With summer 2026 behind us, what a year it has been. An incredibly hot Vegas summer, and I think I speak for many of us locals when I say we are more than ready to welcome the cooler temperatures, beautiful fall evenings, and ushering in the “-ber” months.

This entire year has been a season of growth, change and unexpected blessings. It has ushered in some amazing new opportunities while also weeding out a few things that simply were not intended for this journey. I've learned to be grateful for both. Sometimes what leaves our lives creates the space for what is truly meant to enter.

One of the most unforgettable moments of my professional career came this summer when I was incredibly honored to receive the 2026 Silver State Award for Entrepreneur of the Year. Hearing my name called that evening was surreal. I was genuinely in disbelief, especially standing among so many phenomenal and deserving women. Walking onto that stage to accept the award is a moment I will never forget, and one for which I remain deeply humbled and grateful.

Yet some of this summer's greatest blessings happened far away from any stage.

Watching my beautiful daughter, Madison, become such an incredible and loving mother to my grandson, Ash, has filled my heart in ways that are difficult to put into words. Watching my future son-in-law, Stephon, embrace being a new daddy has been equally special. They are wonderful parents, and this mom has a feeling they have many blessings ahead. Call it a mother's intuition.

And having the privilege of watching Ash grow throughout his first year has been truly remarkable. Family gives us such incredible purpose, and I am exceptionally grateful for mine; both the family we are born into and the friends who become family along the way.

Professionally, I'm incredibly thankful for our Real Vegas team, our marketing and PR efforts, and the collaborations and partnerships that continue to strengthen what we do.

Launching our Top 10 of 2026 has been particularly meaningful. This concept was a vision of mine many years ago, so seeing it finally come to fruition in this issue is incredibly rewarding. It is an honor to recognize our Locals' Choice Top 10 honorees across so many categories and to work alongside Las Vegas who are truly at the top of their game in their respective fields.

It has certainly been a wild year around our world, but here at Real Vegas, we continue to choose an attitude of gratitude. We graciously appreciate your continued readership, friendship and support and look forward to bringing our community together for more fun, meaningful and inspiring events.

We are also continuing to accept submissions for our “Tell Us Your Real Story” series. Have a story worth sharing?

Send it directly to me at [candice@realvegasmagazine.com](mailto:candice@realvegasmagazine.com) or our team at [marketing@realvegasmagazine.com](mailto:marketing@realvegasmagazine.com).

As we head into fall and eventually winter, we wish you and your families a beautiful season filled with gratitude, good health and plenty of reasons to smile.

Follow along at @realvegasmagazine and @realvegasnews for upcoming events and everything happening around our valley. We hope to see your friendly faces out and about very soon!

*With gratitude,*



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*From the  
Publisher's  
Desk*

**CANDICE WIENER**  
CEO & PUBLISHER  
REAL VEGAS MAGAZINE

“

*Sometimes what leaves  
our lives creates the  
space for what is truly  
meant to enter.”*



# K Beauty Hype or Holy Grail

After more than two decades in the beauty industry, I've seen countless skincare trends rise and fall. Some promise miracles and disappear just as quickly, while others reshape how we care for our skin. Recently, as I returned to my esthetics roots through the launch of our Esthetics Program, one trend that stood out everywhere is K Beauty.

From glass skin to snail mucin and multi-step routines, Korean skincare has captured global attention. Naturally, I wanted to know if it is just hype, or is there real substance behind it? After researching ingredients, studying products, and observing the industry, I've come to believe K Beauty is more than a trend but not everything associated with it deserves the spotlight.

*Here is what I discovered.*

## What Truly Works

### Sunscreen: Beauty of Joseon Relief Sun

One area where K Beauty excels is sunscreen. For years, getting clients to wear SPF daily has been a challenge due to heavy, greasy formulas.

Korean sunscreens, like Beauty of Joseon Relief Sun is lightweight, wearable, and easy to incorporate into daily routines. If there's one non-negotiable in skincare, it's sunscreen. No product can outperform consistent sun protection when it comes to preventing aging and maintaining skin health.



By Lissette Waugh  
lmi.edu

## What's Overhyped

On the other hand, sheet masks are often overvalued. While they provide temporary hydration and a refreshed appearance, their effects are short-lived. Many consumers believe they offer transformative results, but true skin health comes from consistent care not occasional treatments.

## Innovations Worth Noting

K Beauty has also pushed forward advancements in regenerative skincare. Ingredients like peptides, growth factors, and polynucleotides (PDRN), along with technologies like LED light therapy, are showing real promise. These treatments support collagen production, reduce inflammation, and improve overall skin health without excessive downtime.

Buzz Word: is PDRN, a generative ingredient derived from salmon.

## Proceed with Caution

### PDRN: Medicube Pink Volume Multi Balm

One concerning trend is the rise of "instant glass skin" treatments promoted online. While they can create a temporary glow, they often mislead consumers into expecting long-term results. No treatment can permanently shrink pores or stop aging overnight.

As professionals, it's our responsibility to educate clients on the difference between temporary cosmetic effects and true skin health. Also clients that have oily skin may want to steer away from K Beauty due to adding extra hydration.

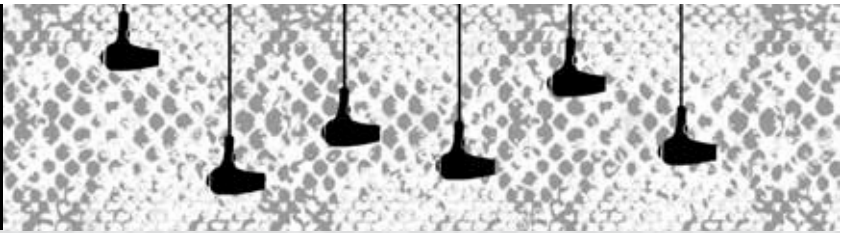
## The Real Takeaway

If there is one lesson K-Beauty reinforces, it's that consistency matters more than perfection. Beautiful skin isn't about chasing trends; it is about protecting your barrier, wearing sunscreen, and making smart choices over time.

Crucially, those smart choices begin with identifying your specific skin type. Because many K-Beauty cult favorites like snail mucin are intensely hydration-focused, they are not a one-size-fits-all solution. For instance, if your skin is naturally oily or prone to congestion, heavy, moisture binding products can sometimes feel too weighty or cause unwanted breakouts. Knowing your skin type ensures you choose formulations that balance your complexion rather than overwhelm it.







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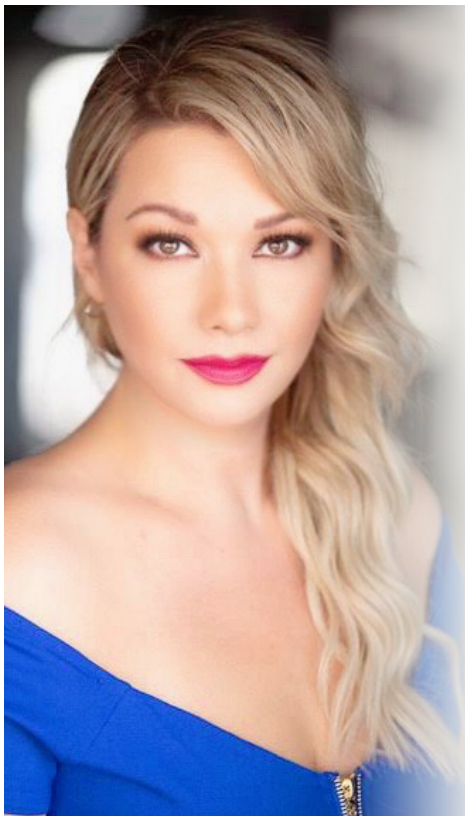
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Congratulations to owner Jennifer Warner, proudly named a 2026 Women Who Wow of Las Vegas.

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# REAL EATS

FROM HONG KONG TO LAS VEGAS... WITH A STOP IN DUBA

By Chef Vic



The culinary world continues to reinvent itself, reaching new heights every day. Let me start by saying that Chinese cuisine has played a major role in my life. My passion for food and the culinary arts is exactly why I chose this profession. Chinese cuisine has always been one of my favorites, and every time I enjoy an authentic Mandarin or Cantonese meal, it brings back incredible memories.

Growing up in Brooklyn, New York, before moving to Staten Island, I was just 30 minutes from Chinatown in Manhattan and one of my favorite neighborhoods, Little Italy. My father took me there often, and every visit was an unforgettable experience. Looking back, those moments played a significant role in shaping me into the chef I am today.

After moving to Las Vegas in the late 1980s, I've had the privilege of watching this city evolve into one of the world's premier culinary destinations. Seeing traditional classics blended with innovative, modern cuisine never ceases to amaze me.

That brings me to one of the finest dining experiences I've had in recent memory: Mott 32, the renowned luxury Chinese restaurant located inside The Palazzo Resort.

A special thank-you goes to Real Vegas Magazine Publisher and

Silver State Entrepreneur of the Year winner Candice Wiener, who introduced me to Executive Chef Anson Chow and this extraordinary restaurant. She always manages to find remarkable places for me to feature.

From the moment you arrive, Mott 32 commands attention like a diamond on the casino floor. The atmosphere can best be described as modern Chinese luxury infused with contemporary Las Vegas sophistication. Every detail of the interior and exterior has been thoughtfully designed, creating an unforgettable first impression before you even take your seat.

Mott 32's reputation extends far beyond Las Vegas. Originally founded in Hong Kong, the award-winning restaurant has expanded internationally with locations including Dubai, and additional expansion is reportedly on the horizon.

Chef Anson Chow's culinary journey is equally impressive. Inspired by legendary chef Thomas Keller, Chow was born in Hong Kong before attending Le Cordon Bleu in Australia. He later returned to Hong Kong to refine his expertise in Cantonese cuisine before continuing his career in Dubai. About two years ago, he arrived in Las Vegas to help establish Mott 32, bringing together years of experience, creativity and respect for traditional Cantonese cooking. And if you've ever mastered dim sum, you know that's an entirely different level of culinary artistry.

Before I dive into the food, I have to recognize the outstanding hospitality team.

Carissa welcomed us with genuine warmth, while our lead server, Alex, delivered impeccable service throughout the meal. Evan and Luke provided seamless support, and General Manager Michael Suh ensured every detail of the experience was flawless. Simply put, this was an all-star team.

Although Mott 32 is well known for its exceptional cocktail program, we visited during the day and opted for mocktails instead. The White Jasmine Cooler and the Golden Dragonfly





*"I always appreciate when a chef cooks from the heart, and every bite reflected genuine passion and craftsmanship."*

were crisp, refreshing and beautifully balanced, among the finest nonalcoholic beverages I've enjoyed.

Then came the dim sum.

The presentation alone was breathtaking. Every dish looked like a work of art. Chef Chow surprised us with a curated selection, choosing to freestyle the menu rather than follow a traditional progression. I always appreciate when a chef cooks from the heart, and every bite reflected genuine passion and craftsmanship.

Next came the appetizers.

The crispy sea bass featured a perfectly golden crust paired with an outstanding dipping sauce. The Wagyu beef puffs were rich, buttery and layered with incredible flavor. The mushroom spring rolls and several additional small plates reinforced why Mott 32 has earned international acclaim long before the main courses even arrived.

The entrées continued to impress.

The General Tso's chicken was among the best I've ever tasted. The lobster fried rice exceeded every expectation. For vegetable lovers, the snow pea tips were beautifully prepared and perfectly seasoned.

Then came the triple-cooked short rib, which was so tender it practically fell off the bone. It immediately raised the standard by which I'll judge short ribs in the future.

Just when I thought the experience couldn't get any better, the signature barbecue pork arrived inside a dramatic smoking presentation box. Perfectly cooked, expertly sliced and incredibly flavorful, it nearly had me jumping out of my seat.

Mott 32 doesn't simply modernize classic Chinese cuisine... it elevates it. As someone who has spent a lifetime in professional kitchens and has experienced exceptional restaurants around the world, I can honestly say this meal delivered something entirely unique.

Despite his demanding schedule, Chef Chow joined us at the table to discuss his culinary philosophy and journey. His passion, humility and dedication to excellence were every bit as impressive as the food itself.

To finish the meal, Chef surprised us with what he called "dessert dim sum."

Presented beneath a smoking cloche, the dessert featured delicate ice cream dim sum alongside an elegant, steamed cake layered with gelatin and finished with edible gold leaf. It was intricate, artistic and absolutely delicious.

From beginning to end, the experience exceeded every expectation.

As a final surprise, Chef Chow personally gave us a tour of the restaurant. All I could say afterward was, "Wow." I want to sincerely thank Chef Chow and the entire Mott 32 team for creating such an extraordinary dining experience. I wish them continued success as they expand into new cities and countries around the world.

Mott 32 is open seven days a week, serving lunch from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and dinner from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Weekend brunch is available Saturdays and Sundays and features an unlimited menu for \$65.

Trust me, you'll thank me later!

Thank you to the entire Real Vegas family, everyone who helps produce this magazine and, most importantly, our incredible readers for supporting local restaurants and the hardworking hospitality professionals who make experiences like this possible.

I'll see you in the next issue of Real Vegas Eats.

Much love,  
Chef Vic Vegas

Trust me, you'll thank me later!

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Much love,  
Chef Vic Vegas



### CHEF VIC'S VERDICT



|                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| Food .....         | 10/10 |
| Presentation ..... | 10/10 |
| Service .....      | 10/10 |
| Atmosphere .....   | 10/10 |
| Creativity .....   | 10/10 |

### OVERALL EXPERIENCE





# FROM CORPORATE BURNOUT TO TARGET SHELVES:

*How Two Best Friends Built  
Yulu Foods*



By Gerard Ramalho  
*Award-Winning Nevada Journalist*

For years, Yuki Adachi and Lulu Lee followed the path many people are encouraged to pursue: work hard, climb the corporate ladder and build a stable career.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything.

Like millions of people forced to slow down and reassess their priorities, Adachi and Lee began asking themselves a difficult question: Is this really the life we want?

That moment of reflection ignited their entrepreneurial spirit and ultimately led them to pursue something with greater purpose.

Today, the Las Vegas-based founders of Yulu Foods are inspiring a new generation of entrepreneurs after transforming a dream born from frustration into a nationally recognized brand whose products are sold in Target stores across the country.

The name "Yulu" combines the first names of two best friends whose journey began with a simple belief: Life is too short to spend doing something that doesn't bring you joy.

For Lee, that realization came during a conversation she still remembers vividly.

After asking for a raise while working in corporate America, she says a supervisor dismissed her contributions by telling her



the job was one that "any housewife could do."

Instead of discouraging her, those words became the catalyst that changed her life.

"That was the moment I knew I was meant for something bigger," Lee said.

Together, she and Adachi made a decision that would redefine their futures.

They would build something of their own.

The journey was anything but easy.

Like many entrepreneurs, they experienced setbacks, abandoned business ideas and moments of uncertainty before eventually discovering their niche: creating authentic Asian-inspired foods and beverages that deliver high-quality flavors in convenient, affordable formats for today's consumers.

Today, Yulu Foods offers everything from café-style boba drink kits to instant udon noodles and its newest innovation, Instant Sago Dessert featuring tiny tapioca pearls.

The company's products have earned coveted shelf space in Target stores nationwide, where the retailer recently recognized Yulu Foods as a featured Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander-owned brand during AANHPI Heritage Month.





“

That was the moment I knew I was meant for something bigger.”

"When we first started our business, we never imagined it would become what it is today," Adachi said. "I was always a Target shopper and would walk the aisles looking at all the products. To now see the products we've spent years creating on those same shelves is surreal."

For Adachi, the accomplishment represents something even more meaningful than business success.

"As an immigrant growing up in the United States, sometimes I felt a little ashamed because I wanted to fit in and be like everybody else," she said. "But this journey, and being in Target while celebrating our heritage, reminds us that it's okay to be different. Just keep going." Their message reaches far beyond the food industry.

Whether someone dreams of launching a business, changing careers or simply pursuing a more fulfilling life, Adachi and Lee hope their story serves as a reminder that success often begins with believing in yourself and having the courage to take the first step.

Their journey reflects the entrepreneurial spirit that continues to define so many Las Vegas business owners. What began with two friends leaving behind corporate careers has grown into a nationally recognized brand found on Target shelves across America.

And for Yulu Foods, they're just getting started.







# THE BLACK BELT EFFECT:

Why the Same People  
Keep Making the **TOP 10**

Every year, magazines publish their lists.

Top 10 Plastic Surgeons.  
Top 10 Personal Injury Attorneys.  
Top 10 Med Spas.  
Top 10 Wellness Centers.  
Top 10 Luxury Home Services.

Most people read those lists and assume the people on them simply got lucky, knew the right people, or happened to be in the right place at the right time.

But after spending decades around elite performers from UFC champions and world-class coaches to billionaires business owners, investors, doctors, and entrepreneurs a different pattern emerges.

The names change.  
The industries change.  
The economy changes.  
Yet somehow the same type of person keeps showing up at the top.  
The reason isn't talent.  
It isn't luck.  
It isn't timing.  
It's what I call The Black Belt Effect.

The Black Belt Effect has nothing to do with martial arts. It has everything to do with how people think, how they respond to adversity, and how they continue moving forward when everyone else stops.

A black belt isn't someone who never gets knocked down. A black belt is someone who gets knocked down, gets back up, learns from it, and keeps showing up long enough to become impossible to ignore.

That's why the people who make Top 10 lists rarely arrive there overnight. They earn their way there one day, one client, one mistake, one lesson, and one improvement at a time. The Black Belt Effect is consistency under pressure. It's discipline when motivation disappears. It's the willingness to keep going when nobody is watching. It's mastering boring fundamentals while everyone else chases shortcuts. I learned this lesson long before I ever stepped into a UFC cage.

I grew up between two very different households. My mother owned her own house-cleaning business. She created her own schedule. She answered to nobody. She found joy in life regardless

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**"THE ANSWER WAS COMBINING  
THE BEST OF BOTH"**

---







of how much money she had. She taught me freedom. She taught me happiness. She taught me that life wasn't about collecting things. But she also showed me something else. She would work just enough. Just enough to get by. Just enough to be comfortable. The entrepreneurial spirit was there, but she unknowingly placed a ceiling on her own potential. My father was the opposite. He worked three jobs. He never complained. He never stopped. He was one of the hardest-working men I've ever known. He provided.

He sacrificed. He outworked almost everyone around him. But he was building someone else's dream.

He had the work ethic, but not the freedom. When I was sixteen, he offered me a truck if I came to live with him. I chose to stay with my mom. I chose happiness. Years later I realized I didn't need to choose one or the other. The answer wasn't my mother. The answer wasn't my father. The answer was combining the best of both. The spirit of an entrepreneur. The work ethic of a laborer. The discipline of a black belt. That combination became The Black Belt Effect.

The Black Belt Effect is why certain people continue showing up on Top 10 lists year after year. Take the top plastic surgeon. Most people see the beautiful office. The awards. The luxury lifestyle. What they don't see are the thousands of consultations. The continuing education. The endless pursuit of perfection. The willingness to improve one percent every day for twenty years. That's a black belt mindset. The same thing applies to the top personal injury attorney. People see the verdicts. The commercials. The success. What they don't see are the countless hours studying cases, preparing arguments, meeting clients, and mastering their craft long after competitors have gone home.

That's the Black Belt Effect.

The same applies to top med spas, wellness centers, business owners, real estate professionals, and entrepreneurs. The industries are different. The mindset is identical. Every elite performer understands a simple truth: You don't become great because of what you do occasionally. You become great because of what you do consistently. That consistency is what

separates champions from contenders. In martial arts, nobody receives a black belt because they had one great day. Nobody gets promoted because they felt motivated for a week. A black belt is earned through thousands of repetitions. Thousands of corrections. Thousands of small improvements. Business works exactly the same way.

The people who make these Top 10 lists didn't suddenly wake up successful. They built systems. They refined processes. They learned from failures. They survived difficult economies. They adapted when technology changed. They kept moving forward while others looked for excuses. That's why success often looks effortless from the outside. What you're actually seeing is the result of twenty years of invisible work. The Black Belt Effect also explains why some people never reach their potential.

They quit too soon. They chase trends instead of mastering fundamentals. They look for hacks instead of habits. They want the black belt without enduring the white belt phase. The uncomfortable truth is that greatness is usually boring. It's showing up when nobody feels like showing up. It's doing the little things correctly. It's repeating successful habits long enough for extraordinary results to appear.

The people featured in this magazine's Top 10 rankings understand that. Whether they're rebuilding confidence through cosmetic surgery, helping clients recover after an accident, improving health through wellness programs, or creating luxury experiences for homeowners, they've earned their place through consistency. They've earned stripes. And eventually those stripes become a black belt. That's the lesson. The Black Belt Effect isn't about fighting. It's about life. It's about becoming the person who keeps showing up. The person who continues learning. The person who refuses to let setbacks define them. The person who understands that success isn't built in giant leaps. It's built one disciplined step at a time. Every generation gets a chance to earn the next stripe. Every entrepreneur gets a chance to build something meaningful. Every professional gets a chance to become the best at what they do. The people on these Top 10 lists didn't get there because they were lucky. They got there because they stayed in the game long enough to become exceptional.

That's The Black Belt Effect.

And if history has taught us anything, it's this: The people who keep showing up eventually become the people everyone else studies.

#### About the Author

Roy "Big Country" Nelson is a Las Vegas native, former four-time MMA champion, UFC The Ultimate Fighter champion and a Renzo Gracie black belt. He is currently partnered with Choice Life Care through its ambassador program.

Learn more at [roynelson.com](http://roynelson.com) and follow him on social media @roynelsonmma.



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## CLIENT REVIEWS

Mr Mazzeo always gave clear and direct answers to my questions, and always kept me in the loop as to where my case stood. Peter's office staff is excellent and always greeted me by name. I've dealt with other firms and it's rare to find an attorneys office that can actually maintain a pleasant mood and be courteous toward their clients.

*Chris L.*

I am so grateful for the professional recommendation we received from one of his peers to hire Peter Mazzeo. Peter was brought in at the 11th hour in an old car accident case, after my current attorney went out of business. Peter was able to accomplish in a short five weeks more than my prior attorney did in five years...

*Tonia F.*

The team at Mazzeo Law is absolutely incredible. They take the time to ensure you fully understand the complexities of your case, and they are always there to provide unwavering support. I have used their services twice now, and they have never let me down. I highly recommend them to anyone in need of dedicated and professional legal representation.

*Jeff B.*

Peter Mazzeo is a the way to go. He greeted me and made me feel like a very important client he took consideration for any conditions I had at the time made appointments for me to seek medical attention.

*Mar. S.*

Amazing job. My case was of a very technical nature and Peter was able to quickly understand all the aspects of the case. We ended up winning. I recommend this lawyer firm for all your needs.

*Chris C.*

Peter Mazzeo is an amazing attorney, very experienced, hardworking and talented. He and his firm have taken care of my family and our case every step of the way. I am always confident to go to him as he is definitely among best attorneys you'll ever meet.

*Kenneth M.*

I'd advise anyone needing a law firm to see the people at this firm. The truly care about the clients. Peter Mazzeo has argued before the state Supreme Court on behalf of a client and won. They will not hand off a case for trial like many others do.

*Cindy S.*

I just want to say that Peter Mazzeo is a wonderful attorney! His knowledge of personal injury law is over the top! I have known him for 5 years, and every experience with him has been professional with great results. His work ethic can be summed up with: "dedication and results for his clients".

*Esteban P.*

I had a wonderful experience at the Mazzeo Law Firm. I met with Peter, and he was absolutely easy to talk to and thoroughly explained everything I needed to know. I like to ask a lot of questions, and he was more than happy to answer each one. Communication was great, both in person and via email. The process was extremely easy. I would definitely recommend him to anyone!

*Kayla W.*

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# THE FACE OF WHAT'S NEXT



**Dr. Shoib Myint has spent decades mastering the art of facial rejuvenation. Now, the renowned oculofacial plastic surgeon is looking beyond traditional surgery, toward a future where precision, technology and regenerative medicine could redefine the way we age.**

There is something particularly appropriate about seeing Dr. Shoib Myint standing beside the advanced technology inside his Las Vegas practice. The image tells much of the story before he ever says a word. Here is a surgeon whose career has been built on extraordinarily precise work, often measured in millimeters, standing alongside technology that represents just how rapidly aesthetic medicine is evolving. For Myint, that evolution isn't intimidating. It's exciting. After decades devoted to the intricate anatomy of the eyes and face, the board-certified, fellowship-trained oculofacial plastic surgeon remains fascinated by one deceptively simple question: What's next? Increasingly, he believes the answer may lie in combining exceptional surgical technique with emerging science that focuses not only on how people look as they age, but also on how tissues heal, regenerate and function.

“

The future isn't simply about looking

**YOUNGER.**

It's about approaching **AGING** differently.”

#### **WHERE MILLIMETERS MATTER**

Oculofacial plastic surgery occupies a highly specialized intersection between ophthalmology, reconstructive surgery and facial aesthetics.

The anatomy surrounding the eyes is extraordinarily complex. Tiny changes can affect expression, symmetry and even how a person is perceived.

That makes precision paramount.

Myint has built his reputation in this exacting world, treating patients from Las Vegas, Beverly Hills and beyond. Some come seeking primary facial rejuvenation; others arrive after previous procedures elsewhere, looking for complex revision work.

His areas of focus include eyelid rejuvenation, deep plane eyelid lifts, brow balancing, deep plane face and neck lifts, microfat and nanofat transfer, revision procedures and regenerative approaches intended to complement aesthetic treatment.

Yet Myint's philosophy is less about performing more and more about knowing precisely what belongs where. A face, after all, is not a collection of individual features.

It is a composition.

Change one element without considering the others and the entire expression can change. Lift too much, remove too much or chase an artificial ideal, and the person looking back in the mirror may no longer feel entirely familiar.

Myint's goal is different.

He wants patients to look like themselves, refreshed, balanced and natural. “The goal isn't to change the face,” Myint says. “It's to restore its harmony.” That distinction has become increasingly important in an era when aesthetic trends can travel around the world in a matter of hours.

Social media has exposed consumers to more cosmetic procedures than ever before, but it has also helped create a certain sameness: identical contours, exaggerated features and treatments sometimes selected because they are trending rather than because they complement the individual.

Myint's approach pushes in the opposite direction. Individual anatomy dictates the treatment.

#### **BEYOND THE OPERATING ROOM**

Surgery, however, represents only part of what now captures Myint's attention.

His growing interest in regenerative medicine reflects a broader shift in aesthetic medicine: exploring whether physicians can do more than reposition or reshape tissue and instead better understand the biological environment in which that tissue ages and heals. “The future of plastic surgery is very exciting,” Myint says. “There's a shift in medicine toward biologic signaling



# MILLIMETERS MATTER.



and regenerative modalities."Traditional aesthetic surgery primarily addresses structure. Skin, muscle, fat and other tissues can be repositioned, restored or refined to improve facial balance. Regenerative medicine asks another question: What if physicians can also improve the environment in which those tissues function and recover?

Researchers across medicine are studying cellular signaling, tissue regeneration, fat-derived therapies and other biologic approaches for their potential applications. Myint is particularly interested in how emerging regenerative strategies may complement aesthetic surgery, support healing and influence the future of longevity-focused medicine.

But he approaches innovation through the lens of a physician, not simply as someone chasing the newest wellness trend.

New does not automatically mean better.

Evidence matters. Experience matters. Patient selection matters.

Technology, no matter how sophisticated, still requires someone who knows when, and how to use it.

## THE ART BEHIND THE SCIENCE

Perhaps that explains why Myint's work is difficult to describe solely in clinical terms.

There is science in understanding anatomy.  
There is technical skill in executing surgery.  
But there is also artistry in recognizing proportion.

Two patients can walk into his office asking for exactly the same procedure and require entirely different approaches. Their bone structure, skin, eyes, brows, facial volume and natural asymmetries are different. Their definition of looking like themselves is different, too. Myint sees those differences not as complications, but as the point.

The most successful aesthetic result, in his view, shouldn't announce the procedure.

It should reveal the person.  
That philosophy becomes especially important around the eyes. The eyes communicate emotion before a person speaks. Alter them too aggressively and the effect can extend far beyond aesthetics. Restore their natural balance, however, and a patient may simply appear more rested, open and refreshed.

It is one reason Myint has devoted so much of his professional life to this remarkably small but consequential area of the face.

## TEACHING WHAT COMES NEXT

Myint's influence also extends beyond his own patients.

Throughout his career, he has taught physicians and surgeons and contributed to the academic side of his specialty through medical publications and textbooks on oculofacial plastic surgery.

He is also involved with the San Diego Academy of Regenerative Therapies and Sciences, where physicians and other experts explore developments in regenerative medicine and their potential clinical applications.

For Myint, teaching carries a different kind of responsibility.

A surgeon can influence the patients who enter one operating room. An educator can influence how other physicians approach thousands of patients they may never personally meet.

That ability to share knowledge and challenge conventional thinking has become an important part of what he hopes to contribute to the next generation of medicine."My hope is to leave behind a movement in the longevity and regenerative space using cellular reset," he says.

It is an ambitious idea. But medicine has always evolved because physicians were willing to ask whether an accepted approach was really the final one.

Myint believes aesthetic medicine may be approaching another such moment.

## THE FUTURE STILL NEEDS A HUMAN TOUCH

For all the discussion surrounding cellular science, advanced devices and emerging technology, however, Myint repeatedly returns to something decidedly low-tech: Trust. Patients entering an aesthetic surgeon's office are often placing far more than their appearance in someone else's hands. They may be carrying years of insecurity, the effects of aging, disappointment from a previous procedure or simply a desire for the outside to better reflect how they still feel inside.

That requires listening before operating.

It requires knowing when a procedure is appropriate, and when another approach, or no procedure at all, may be the wiser recommendation.

And it requires understanding that the best aesthetic medicine should ultimately serve the person rather than the procedure. That may be the most revealing element of the photograph accompanying this story.

Myint stands beside the technology, not behind it.  
The machine is impressive, certainly.  
But it remains a tool.

The physician is still the one required to understand anatomy, evaluate the patient, interpret the science and determine how, or whether, that technology belongs in an individualized treatment plan.

Perhaps the future of aesthetics won't ultimately be defined by choosing between science and artistry, surgery and regeneration, technology and human intuition.

Perhaps its greatest advances will come from knowing how to combine them.

And that is precisely where Dr. Shoib Myint appears most comfortable: at the intersection of what medicine can do today and what it may make possible tomorrow. After decades spent mastering the face, he isn't simply interested in turning back the clock. He wants to understand how we might change the conversation about aging altogether.

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# HEART, EXPERTISE & A PRESCRIPTION FOR LIVING WELL



**F**or more than 25 years, Dr. Zia Khan has cared for hearts across the Las Vegas Valley; building a career defined by medical innovation, leadership, compassion and a personality his patients won't soon forget.

When your career revolves around matters of the heart, perhaps it's fitting to bring plenty of your own to the job.

For more than 25 years, Dr. Zia Khan has cared for patients throughout Las Vegas and surrounding communities, earning a reputation not only for advanced cardiovascular care but also for the kindness, compassion and personality he brings to his practice.

Dr. Khan founded Desert Cardiovascular Consultants in 2006 and is triple board-certified in internal medicine, cardiovascular disease and interventional cardiology. He is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology and the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Interventions.

His influence extends throughout the Las Vegas medical community. Dr. Khan maintains privileges at hospitals across the valley and has served in numerous leadership positions, including roles on medical executive and credentialing committees and as a department chair and cardiac catheterization laboratory director. He currently serves as director of the cardiac catheterization lab at Southern Hills Hospital and holds a leadership role on the hospital's STEMI committee.

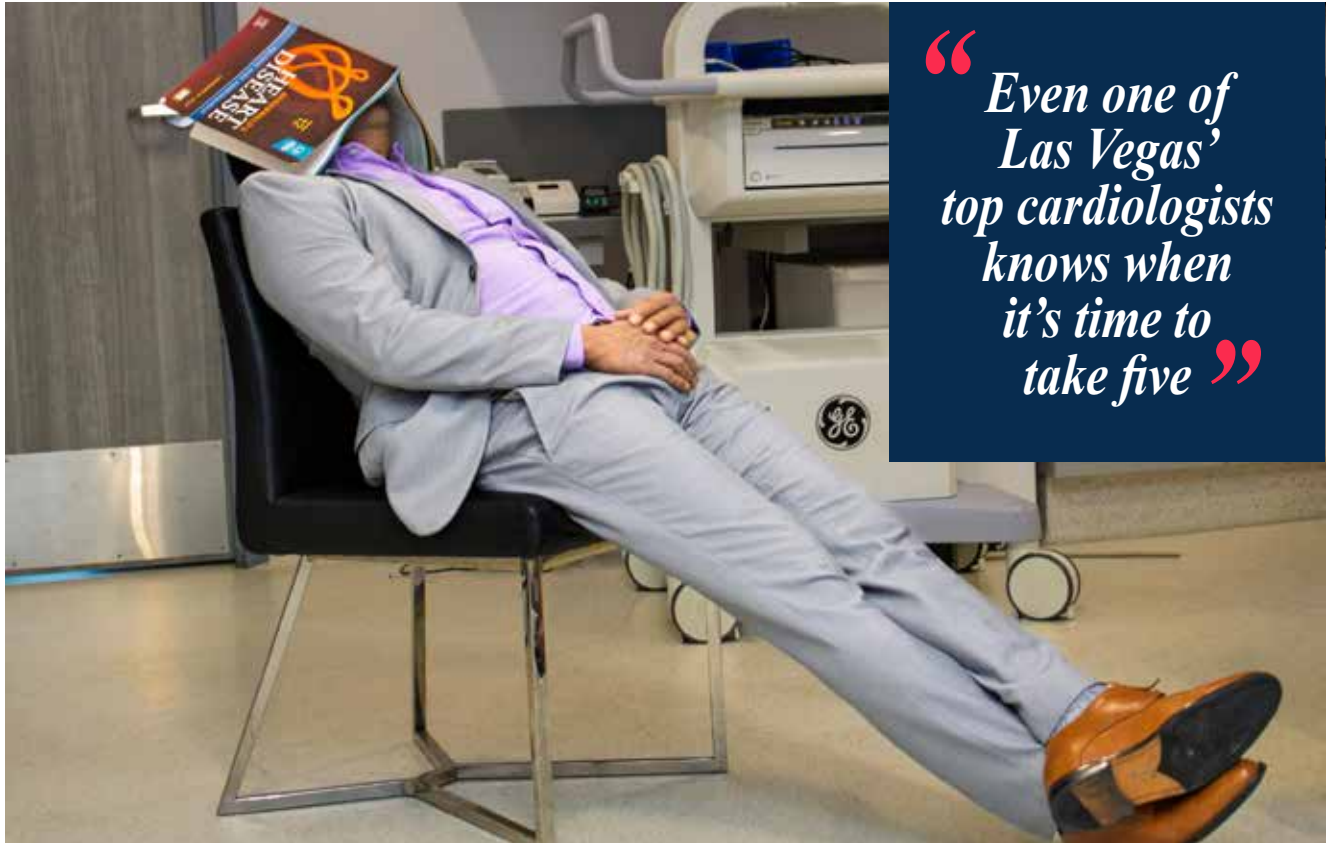
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***“When your career  
Revolves around  
Matters of the heart,  
Perhaps it's fitting  
To bring plenty of  
Your own to the job”***

---







*“Even one of Las Vegas’ top cardiologists knows when it’s time to take five”*

His career has also included several Las Vegas medical “firsts.” Dr. Khan performed the first cardiac catheterization lab case and first PFO closure at Southern Hills Hospital. He was also the first physician in Las Vegas to use Santreva, a novel atherectomy device, at Desert Cardiovascular Consultants to treat completely occluded arteries.

Dr. Khan completed his internal medicine training at the University of Cincinnati in 1993, followed by a cardiology fellowship there in 1996. He completed fellowship training in interventional cardiology at the University of Louisville in 1997 and devoted additional training to cardiac transplantation.

His career has encompassed basic and clinical research, with work published in peer-reviewed medical journals. He also received postdoctoral fellowship grant support from the American Heart Association and has presented research at national meetings of the American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association.

Education remains an important part of his work. Dr. Khan has been recognized by the University of Cincinnati and holds an assistant professor position at Touro University, where medical students regularly rotate through his practice.

His accolades extend beyond medicine. Among his honors are the OCA Asian Pacific American Advocates ICON Award and Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada’s Man of the Year recognition. He has also received local business and Filipino

community honors and has been recognized as a top cardiologist annually since 2016, while appearing on the covers of several Nevada publications.

Dr. Khan’s commitment to community is equally important. He supports the Human Rights Campaign and Developments in Literacy, an organization dedicated to expanding educational opportunities, particularly for girls in Pakistan.

Today, Dr. Khan’s focus is on peripheral artery disease (PAD), continuing his commitment to advanced cardiovascular care and helping patients maintain healthier, more active lives.

But credentials tell only part of his story.

Away from medicine, Dr. Khan is a devoted father to two teenage daughters and an artist who paints in oils. He travels to explore art, history and culture and enjoys hiking and skiing. Despite a résumé that could fill several pages, he clearly knows when not to take himself too seriously. Behind the physician, professor and cardiovascular leader is a man with a genuine sense of humor, and a personality every bit as memorable as his accomplishments.

That combination of expertise, compassion, curiosity and character is precisely what makes Dr. Zia Khan stand out, and why Real Vegas Magazine is proud to recognize him among our **2026 Top 10 Cardiologists of Las Vegas**.

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# From Superfoods to Peptides:

The visionary evolution of Bodela

The wellness industry is entering a new era—one where nutrition, science, longevity, and personalized health are increasingly converging. Among the most talked-about developments is the growing interest in peptides and their potential role in modern wellness and human optimization.

Once primarily associated with scientific and clinical research, peptides have become increasingly visible within the broader health and wellness conversation. Advances in biotechnology, research, and formulation are driving new interest in how these compounds may support areas such as recovery, metabolic health, performance, and healthy aging.

As interest continues to grow, so does the importance of choosing providers that prioritize quality, transparency, testing, and responsible sourcing. Not all peptide providers operate to the same standards, making research and due diligence essential for consumers navigating this rapidly evolving category.

The peptide landscape is still evolving, but one thing is clear: the conversation around longevity and human optimization is becoming increasingly sophisticated.

As science continues to advance, the next generation of wellness may be defined not simply by what we consume, but by how precisely we understand and support the way the body functions.



**TOP 10**  
PEPTIDE PROVIDERS

Our **Top 10 Peptides Providers** spotlight recognizes companies making an impression in this emerging space. From product quality and laboratory standards to innovation, customer experience, and commitment to transparency, these providers represent some of the names helping shape the future of peptide-focused wellness.

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# BEYOND THE HYPE:

## What Peptides Are, and Why the Conversation Is Changing

Peptides have become one of the fastest-growing topics in wellness, performance and healthy aging, yet they remain widely misunderstood. Despite the recent surge in attention, peptides are not new. Scientists have been studying them for decades, and many are naturally occurring compounds already found throughout the human body. So, what exactly are peptides?

Simply put, peptides are short chains of amino acids, the building blocks of proteins. They act as chemical messengers, helping cells communicate and regulate countless biological processes, from tissue repair and metabolism to immune function and hormone signaling. As we age, many of these natural processes become less efficient, leading researchers to explore whether certain peptides may help support healthy aging and recovery.

Interest in peptides has grown rapidly among physicians, athletes and wellness professionals, particularly as research continues to investigate their potential applications. While some peptides are FDA-approved for specific medical conditions, many others remain under clinical investigation, making it important for consumers to separate emerging science from marketing claims.

Supporters of peptide therapy often report improvements in areas such as recovery, sleep, body composition, energy and overall well-being. However, results vary from person to person, and experts emphasize that peptides are not a miracle cure or a replacement for healthy habits. Nutrition, exercise, sleep and preventive healthcare remain the foundation of long-term wellness.

As with any health decision, education is essential. Consumers should work with qualified healthcare professionals, review available scientific evidence and discuss whether peptide therapy is appropriate for their individual goals and medical history.

Whether peptides ultimately become a cornerstone of future medicine or remain a specialized treatment option, one thing is clear: the conversation surrounding them is evolving. As research expands, so does public interest, making now an ideal time to learn the science behind the headlines rather than relying on misconceptions.

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### EDITORIAL NOTE:

This article is intended for informational purposes only and should not be considered medical advice. Always consult a licensed healthcare provider before beginning any new treatment or therapy.

# The TikTok TIGHTENING TREATMENTS

## EVERYONE IN LAS VEGAS *Is Talking About*

**Why XERF and Quantum RF Are Becoming the Go-To Alternatives for People Who Want Results Without Looking "Done"**

*By Melanie Speed, NP*



If you've spent more than five minutes on TikTok lately, you've probably seen someone claiming they've discovered the secret to tighter skin, a more defined jawline or even a facelift without surgery.

For once, social media isn't exaggerating.

At Flawless Med Spa, we've seen a significant shift over the past year. Las Vegas patients aren't asking for dramatic transformations anymore. They're looking for something far more sophisticated: natural-looking results that help them appear refreshed, lifted and confident—without anyone being able to pinpoint exactly what changed.

That's where two of today's most talked-about aesthetic treatments come in: XERF and Quantum RF.

These aren't your mother's skin-tightening treatments. They're faster, more advanced and designed for people who want to age gracefully rather than simply look younger.

One of the biggest trends we're seeing, from busy moms in Summerlin to executives on the Strip...is a move away from overfilled faces and obvious cosmetic procedures.

Today's luxury is looking like yourself.

Just a more rested, refreshed and confident version. Celebrities have helped lead this movement. Think less "Instagram Face" and more the naturally sculpted look seen on today's red carpets. From actresses and influencers to television personalities, the beauty conversation has shifted away from volume and filters toward skin quality, collagen production and long-term maintenance.

The focus has become prevention instead of correction.

That's exactly why treatments like XERF and Quantum RF continue to gain momentum.



If I had to choose the treatment generating the most excitement right now, it would be XERF.

This next-generation radiofrequency technology uses multiple frequencies to heat the skin at varying depths simultaneously, helping stimulate collagen and elastin production while tightening the skin's underlying support structures.

Simply put, think of it as a workout for your collagen.

Patients love XERF because there are no needles, no surgery and virtually no downtime. Most return to work, meetings, dinner reservations or school pickup immediately after treatment.

Some of the most common concerns we treat include:

- Mild to moderate skin laxity
- Early jowling
- Loose skin along the jawline
- Neck aging
- Fine lines and wrinkles
- General loss of firmness

Between Southern Nevada's dry climate, intense year-round sunshine and active outdoor lifestyle, collagen loss often appears earlier than many people expect.





“*Today's luxury is looking like yourself.*”

### JUST A RESTED, REFRESHED AND CONFIDENT VERSION

XERF helps address those concerns before they become surgical concerns.

It's especially popular among patients in their 30s, 40s and 50s who want to stay ahead of the aging process while maintaining a completely natural appearance.

While XERF is entirely noninvasive, Quantum RF takes skin tightening a step further.

This minimally invasive treatment delivers radiofrequency energy beneath the skin to tighten tissue, stimulate collagen production and improve facial and body contouring from the inside out.

Think of it as the bridge between traditional skin-tightening treatments and surgery.

It's an excellent option for patients who aren't ready for a facelift but want more dramatic improvement than surface treatments alone can provide.

Some of my favorite treatment areas include:

- Lower face and jawline
- Neck
- Under the chin
- Abdomen following weight loss
- Arms and other areas with mild skin laxity

What makes Quantum RF especially exciting is that it doesn't simply improve the appearance of the skin, it creates meaningful tissue contraction while stimulating long-term collagen remodeling.

Results continue improving over several months as your body naturally produces new collagen.

For patients who have experienced weight fluctuations, pregnancy or age-related skin laxity, Quantum RF can provide noticeable tightening and contouring without the scars or lengthy recovery associated with surgery.

Las Vegas has always been ahead of beauty trends.



We're a city that values looking and feeling our best, but we're also incredibly busy. Most people don't have the luxury of disappearing for weeks to recover from surgery.

Whether you're attending conventions, working in hospitality, entertaining clients, relaxing by the pool or simply enjoying everything Southern Nevada has to offer, downtime matters.

That's why treatments offering noticeable improvement with minimal recovery have become some of the fastest-growing procedures in aesthetics.

People want treatments that fit into their lives, not treatments that force life to pause.

And let's be honest: In a city where photos, events and social media are part of everyday life, confidence matters.

The goal isn't perfection.

The goal is looking refreshed, healthy and like the very best version of yourself.

One of the biggest misconceptions I hear is that skin-tightening treatments are only for people already experiencing significant signs of aging.

The reality is that some of the best results happen when we begin before those changes become severe.

Today's aesthetic patients aren't waiting until they need a facelift.

They're investing in collagen early.

They're protecting their skin.

They're choosing prevention over correction.

That's why XERF and Quantum RF have become two of the most requested treatments at Flawless Med Spa.

They're not about changing who you are.

They're about helping your skin keep up with how vibrant, energetic and confident you already feel.

And in Las Vegas, where confidence never goes out of style, that's a trend I don't see slowing down anytime soon.

To learn whether XERF or Quantum RF is right for you, follow @melaniespeed and @flawlessmedspas on social media for the latest treatment insights, aesthetic trends and real patient results. You can also visit [FlawlessMedSpas.com](https://www.flawlessmedspas.com) to schedule a personalized consultation and begin your journey toward healthier, firmer-looking skin.



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## GAVIN ERNSTONE

With over 30 years of experience selling real estate, Gavin Ernstone is the preeminent luxury agent across the Las Vegas Valley and the founder/broker of Simply Vegas. His clientele includes professional athletes, actors, musicians, Fortune 500 CEO's and more. Gavin offers an unmatched level of personal service and attention to detail that sets him apart from the competition.

Gavin began selling real estate in his hometown of London, England at just 17 years old. Looking for more opportunity he eventually made the move to Las Vegas, working nights as a casino dealer at Caesar's Palace whilst selling real estate by day. Through his hard work and dedication to his clients, Gavin was able to move quickly and seamlessly into the luxury real estate space and has since earned the reputation as the top luxury agent in Las Vegas.

In 2009, Gavin started the Simply Vegas brokerage. Beginning with just a handful of agents, Simply Vegas now boasts more than 600 agents and has become synonymous with luxury real estate.

Outside of real estate, Gavin has a passion for sports car racing and has been competing professionally with Audi in the IMSA racing series for the last 5 years. In December of 2023, Gavin and his wife Kelli welcomed their new son George to the world. George has two big sisters—beagles Cashew Chicken and Coco Pup.

Gavin Ernstone is the Broker and owner of Simply Vegas. He has been selling homes in the Las Vegas Valley for over 30 years and is widely respected as one of the top Luxury home agents in Las Vegas.



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# THE BUSINESS OF THE BET

*How AJ Gunasena Turned Calculated Risk into a Growing Las Vegas Empire*

*“There is a difference between taking a risk and understanding one.”*

**T**here is a difference between taking a risk and understanding one. For AJ Gunasena, that distinction has become the foundation of a business portfolio spanning industries that, at first glance, might seem worlds apart: sports analytics, venture capital, private real estate lending, media, and strategic brand development.

Look closer, however, and a common thread emerges.

## **Data. Discipline. Positioning. Execution.**

The Las Vegas entrepreneur and founder of BETWITHAJ™ has built his career around the idea that the principles behind a successful bet aren't all that different from those behind a successful business decision: Understand the numbers. Manage the downside. Recognize opportunity. And when the right one appears, execute.

"I've always looked at entrepreneurship as a platform rather than a single destination," Gunasena said. "Once you understand how to build systems, manage risk and create value, those skills can translate into entirely different industries."

## **Beyond the Bet**

Gunasena may be known professionally as a gambler, but BETWITHAJ Consulting LLC reveals another side of that identity. The company provides sports analytics and consulting supported by proprietary research and data analysis, bringing a more structured approach to a space frequently driven by emotion, instinct and speculation. It's also a window into how Gunasena thinks.

The wager may get the attention. The analysis comes first. Through BETWITHAJ, his objective is to give clients research that can support more informed decision-making. That philosophy, using information to evaluate risk rather than pretending risk doesn't exist, carries through nearly every venture in his portfolio.

And those ventures have expanded well beyond sports.

## **When Capital Meets Strategy**

For the past five years, Gunasena has served as venture capitalist and managing partner of AJG Venture Group LLC, a private investment firm deploying its own capital across startups, small businesses, software, artificial intelligence, fintech, biotechnology, and select real estate and media opportunities.

But the firm's model isn't simply about writing a check.

AJG Venture Group seeks businesses where stronger execution, strategic capital and improved positioning can unlock growth and potential exits. The firm works alongside founders and operators to strengthen internal systems, sharpen positioning, improve revenue strategies and build stronger brands.

It's an approach that puts Gunasena somewhere between investor and operator.

"The industry can change, but the principles don't," he said. "You still need disciplined execution, calculated risk management, strong positioning and systems that can grow."

That philosophy is particularly relevant in an era when capital alone may not solve the underlying problems inside a company.

A business can have a great idea but weak execution. A strong product but poor positioning. Revenue but no scalable system. An entrepreneur can raise money without knowing what to do with it.

Gunasena's strategy is to look beyond the obvious asset and ask a different question:

**What could this become?**





## Betting on Las Vegas

Real estate adds another dimension to the portfolio.

Through FlipWithAJ Real Estate Group LLC, Gunasena provides private financing for residential and commercial investment projects in the Las Vegas market, including acquisitions, renovations and development opportunities.

It's another seemingly different business connected by a familiar principle: identifying opportunity and putting capital to work strategically.

Rather than seeing each company as an isolated venture, Gunasena views them as parts of a larger ecosystem.

"Your first successful business should give you the experience and leverage to build the next one," he said. "When those businesses complement each other, you create more resilience and more opportunities."

That may be one of the most revealing ideas behind his expansion.

For Gunasena, diversification isn't about chasing whatever industry happens to be hot. It's about taking systems, relationships, knowledge and capital developed in one venture and using them to create leverage in another.

## The Creative Side of the Equation

Then there is the side of Gunasena that doesn't fit neatly into a spreadsheet.

As executive creative director for Real Vegas Magazine, he contributes to luxury lifestyle storytelling, visual branding and business-focused media initiatives.

He also advises select organizations and campaigns on digital strategy, fundraising narratives and brand positioning.

At first, creative direction may seem like an unlikely addition to a résumé built around numbers, investing and analytics. But within Gunasena's larger philosophy, it makes sense.

Because numbers may determine whether a business works, but perception can determine whether anyone notices.

Branding, storytelling and positioning are therefore not afterthoughts. They're assets.

That intersection of analytical thinking and creative execution has increasingly become part of Gunasena's identity as an entrepreneur.

## Building the Next Move

Gunasena's entrepreneurial path began after he stepped away from the traditional corporate environment in favor of independent business ownership.

Over time, the goal evolved from building one successful company into creating an interconnected portfolio of businesses and investments.

Now, he is looking toward the next stage.

Through AJG Venture Group, he plans to continue identifying founders and companies with scalable models, strong brand potential and opportunities for meaningful growth. At the same time, he intends to further develop BETWITHAJ's analytics capabilities, expand his private real estate lending portfolio and grow his strategic consulting activities.

It's an ambitious collection of interests, but Gunasena doesn't see finance, technology, marketing, operations and media as separate worlds.

He sees them as pieces of the same one.

"The line between finance, technology, marketing and operations keeps getting smaller," he said. "Being able to understand how those areas work together creates a major competitive advantage."

And perhaps that's the real story behind the man known as BETWITHAJ.

The most important bet isn't necessarily the one placed on a game.

It's the calculated bet on an idea.  
On a founder.

On a property.

On a company that hasn't reached its potential.

And sometimes, on yourself.

For AJ Gunasena, the bet may open the door, but what you build after it is what truly matters.



# BO KARLEN:

## FROM NIGHTLIFE PIONEER TO TECH INNOVATOR

Bo Karlen's journey began in his hometown of Portland, Oregon, where he spent 30 years and became a pioneer in the emerging underground rave scene while also competing as a four-sport high school, college and professional athlete.

His introduction to the electronic music world came in 1992, when he traveled to San Francisco to see legendary DJ Sasha at the opening of Sound Factory. That experience changed his life forever.

With a bigger vision for bringing entertainment, music and people together with no limits, Bo relocated to the entertainment capital of the world, Las Vegas, in the spring of 1996. There, he launched his first company, Botown Productions.

Over the years, Botown Productions became responsible for producing and promoting more than 1,000 events. With the rapid emergence of the house music scene, Las Vegas became the perfect environment for Bo to expand his passion for people, music and entertainment — and his vision for where the industry was headed.



After more than three decades spanning nightlife, entertainment, VIP services, marketing, sales and technology, Karlen isn't finished reinventing himself. He's even hinting that a few legendary old-school Botown parties could make a comeback.



Bo soon joined forces with Las Vegas nightlife legend Gino LoPinto, who had already played an important role in the launch of the historic Club Utopia. Together, they helped launch the world-famous Spearmint Rhino After Hours, creating an after-hours experience that would influence the way people partied in Las Vegas and across the country.

Bo continued producing and promoting some of the biggest parties and nightlife events in the country while developing signature Botown productions and partnerships, including the Annual Vegas Prom, Fetish & Fantasy

Halloween Ball promotions, Rubber, Pimp N Ho, the Nympho Valentine's Day Mansion Party, DJ Mix-Off competitions, adult lifestyle events and exclusive Las Vegas Fourth of July mansion parties. His work also coincided with the opening and rise of clubs including C2K, Seven, Ice, Baby's, Body English and Rehab.

For approximately 20 years, Bo also served as a West Coast promoter for Ultra Music Festival and Space Miami while producing major Las Vegas events surrounding Miami's Winter Music Conference, including weeklong Hotel Unity celebrations featuring more than 100 DJs and closing parties.

More recently, Bo partnered with Sernafest for its annual Supercar Saturdays November event, featuring 40 hypercars and supercars, including his legendary "Bo Mobile" Acura NSX.

From the beginning of Empire Ballroom, Botown Productions became a major force in promoting its legendary after-hours events while also producing some of the most memorable themed parties in Las Vegas.

Through decades of work in nightlife, entertainment, music, events and hospitality, Bo built a recognizable name and unique personal brand worldwide. He earned the respect of DJs, producers, promoters, entertainers and industry professionals while establishing himself as a veteran of the international nightlife and event community.

In 2007, Bo expanded his vision by launching Botown Global VIP Services, a full-service global VIP travel, marketing, event, hosting and consulting company. Backed by more than 20 years of nightlife experience and more than \$10 million in sales, Botown Global developed into one of Las Vegas'

leading independent VIP hosting and relationship-driven service companies.

In 2019, Bo's extensive network and reputation for connecting people and opportunities opened the door to an entirely new chapter, technology.

He was recruited by emerging technology companies to help introduce and launch innovative products in the Las Vegas market. One of those early opportunities was with iDrink Beverages and its nano-water technology, which helped open additional doors into the technology industry.

That evolution ultimately led to Bo being recruited by Branson/Cuban USA Group for interactive AI holograms, anamorphic displays, immersive technology, artificial intelligence, marketing, lead generation and next-generation experiential technology.

Today, he is involved in partnerships surrounding interactive AI hologram and anamorphic technology while preparing for the launch of his own company, **Advanced Intelligence Technologies**, scheduled for January 2027.

And after more than three decades of nightlife, entertainment, events, VIP services, marketing, sales, technology and relationship building, Bo still has plenty left in the tank.

The sky is the limit, and he is even hinting that some legendary old-school Botown parties may be making a comeback.

Stay tuned for the upcoming **Bo Knows Experience Podcast**, the continued expansion of Botown Global, the launch of **Advanced Intelligence Technologies** and much more from Bo Karlen and the Botown brand.

Bo is also launching a personalized sunglasses line called **Sinner**, perfect for Sin City and designed for world-class DJs, celebrities, athletes and influencers. The line is set to premiere in 2027.

Check out **Sinner.America** and **BotownGlobal** on Instagram.

**BOTOWN — "BRINGING EVERYONE TOGETHER AS ONE"**





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*Iconic*  
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# BECOMING *ICONIC*

*Tammy Lier on Reinvention, Purpose  
and the Power of Finishing What You Start*



# 01

## WHERE IT ALL STARTED.

***I have always believed that we are all works in progress, and I want to say that first because everything else in this story rests on it. I am not a finished product, and I never intend to be. I am someone who keeps starting, learning and finishing.***

From a very young age, I was always thinking about what I wanted to do with my life. At 12, I was babysitting on weekends. At 13, I got my work permit and took a job at a restaurant. I wasn't just earning money. I found myself wanting to learn, and to learn fast.

Around that same time, I read *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude* by Napoleon Hill and W. Clement Stone. It introduced me to the 17 Success Principles and planted an idea I've never let go of: Your attitude is not something that happens to you; it's something you choose and build.

For a girl who was already thinking about her future, it gave me a framework for the drive I already felt. My philosophy today is a hybrid of those principles and everything I have lived since.

Looking back, I see that growth rarely moves in a straight line. It moves in cycles: a season of stretching, a season of consolidating and a season of reinvention. I have lived enough of these cycles to recognize the pattern and trust it when it comes around again. My current work is the culmination of all of them: the books, seminars, fire walks, cities, coaching and calling.

# 02

## WHAT GUIDES ME

My values have always guided me. I have a long history of starting new things, and I am a fanatic about completing them. I don't chase applause or recognition. Often, I couldn't care less who knows about my work. I take on projects to start them, finish them and execute my game plan. I get a deep, internal satisfaction from completing what I set out to do.

That may sound simple, but it has shaped every chapter of my life. Starting is exciting for everyone. Finishing is where character shows up. When the novelty fades, the schedule gets hard and no one is watching, the person who completes what they began is the person who earns their own trust.

That trust is worth more to me than any title or audience.

# 03

## MY JUNIOR YEAR: MIAMI

During my junior year at UC Davis, I saw Tony Robbins live, and it changed everything. Something in me knew that what I had just experienced was not entertainment. It was a door.

That summer, I moved to Miami and went to work promoting programs for Brian Tracy, Denis Waitley, Herb Cohen and Jim Rohn.

I was young, inspired and hungry for growth. I didn't yet know exactly what I was mastering. I only knew I was supposed to grow, learn and prepare. Working around those four minds shaped my understanding of personal development, influence and the power of mentorship. I learned how a message moves from a stage into a person's life, and how much of that depends on the messenger's belief in the message.



# 04

## WORKING FOR TONY

After graduating from college, I went to work for Tony Robbins. I promoted his one-day event geared toward salespeople, the same event I had attended from the front row, dead center. Tony changed the name from SI, Strategic Influence, to The Competitive Edge. I ended up living in 25 cities in five years, moving every eight weeks.

It was intense, exhilarating and transformative. Living out of a suitcase and starting over in a new city every two months teaches you quickly what you are made of. You learn to walk into a room of strangers and build trust fast. You learn to adapt without losing yourself and keep your standards high when everything around you keeps changing.

I built a strong muscle during those years. I'll never forget telling Tony, "I think I have to become a professional communicator." He saw it in me. He selected me as one of his first students to become a Robbins Research International certified life coach through his Results Partnership program.



# 05

## THE BOOT CAMP

Those 30 days of direct coaching from Tony were what I call his boot camp. As budding coaches, we mastered DISC, walked on fire and went through all of his programs. We even jumped out of an airplane, just in case any of us still feared anything.

What did I do? I just did it. I ate up all the brain food I could consume. The fire walk and the airplane weren't really about fire or altitude. They were about proving to myself that the limits you carry in your head are often not real. Once you've done something your mind told you was impossible, it becomes very hard to accept the next limit it tries to hand you.



PETER LIK TAMMY LIER  
A Collection of Fine Art and Inspiration



# 06

## WHY I LOVE SPEAKING AND COACHING

Over the years, I've learned why I truly enjoy speaking and coaching. My passion is people: their goals, breakthroughs and awakenings. I love watching someone step into their own strength and realize they can do more, be more and create more than they thought possible.

Helping someone unlock their potential has been one of the greatest joys of my life. A good coach doesn't hand people a new life. A good coach helps them see the one they already have the capacity to build and then holds the standard while they build it.

# 07

## CLAIMING CALM

I chose to be a speaker, entrepreneur and life changer. I knew that if I kept learning, growing and being my best, I might develop a lasting passion for life and for helping and serving those around me.

I don't believe in claiming fame. I believe in claiming calm, becoming better each day and learning from every challenge.

Fame depends on other people. Calm is something you build inside yourself, and it holds up when the attention moves on.



## THE SIX VALUES BENEATH MY LIFE

These are the values that have guided me through every cycle:

1. **Faith and Calling:** A belief that my life has a purpose larger than my own comfort and a willingness to follow it.
2. **Growth and Learning:** A commitment to stay a student, no matter how much I've done.
3. **Completion and Discipline:** Finishing what I start and showing up on the days I don't feel like it.
4. **Service and People:** Measuring my work by the lives it improves, not the recognition it earns.
5. **Calm and Daily Betterment:** Choosing steady progress over dramatic gestures.
6. **Purpose and Alignment:** Making sure my actions match my values and adjusting when they drift.

They are the architecture of my life, the foundation beneath every chapter and the strength behind every decision.



“

*Starting is exciting  
for everyone.  
Finishing is where  
character shows up.”*

## THE TEN PILLARS OF AN ICONIC LIFE

### 1. Reinvention as a Discipline

Reinvention isn't a crisis response. It's a practice. I went from a college student in the audience at a Tony Robbins event to working for him, then becoming one of his first certified life coaches, and eventually becoming a speaker and entrepreneur.

More recently, I took my YouTube channel, which began as a fitness channel, and rebuilt it into The Iconic Interview, a show devoted to conversations with people who have shaped their industries.

The name changed. The core - my love of people and their stories - stayed exactly the same.

### 2. Purpose Realignment

Purpose evolves, and you have to keep asking what has changed and what hasn't.

During my years with Tony, I remember saying to him, "I think I have to become a professional communicator." That sentence redirected everything.

I hadn't planned it at the start, but when the moment arrived, I recognized it, said it out loud and adjusted my direction to match.

### 3. Execution Integrity

Lip service is easy. Operationalizing is the work. On the road working for Tony, I lived in 25 cities in five years, moving every eight weeks. There was no room for good intentions in that schedule. Every city meant a real plan, real deadlines and real results. That's where I learned that a game plan only counts once you execute it.

I remember living in New York City and taking a train, a bus and a cab to get to one of my sales presentations, only to learn I was speaking to an audience of two.

In the seminar promotion business, this happens. It's where systems and clarity of goals matter.



### 4. Future Architecture

You can't live a life you haven't designed. When I built The Iconic Interview series, I designed the programming to coincide with my Ten Pillars. The future doesn't arrive on its own; we build it piece by piece. And we can all learn from one another.

### 5. Psychological Ownership

Owning your mind means doing the thing your mind says you can't.

At Tony's boot camp, I walked on fire and jumped out of an airplane. Those moments weren't really about the fire or altitude. We were taught that the limits in our heads are rarely the real limits and that we can choose our response, no matter how loud the fear becomes. What did I do? I just did it.



## 6. Cognitive Expansion

Growth isn't just knowing more. It's thinking differently. During those 30 days of direct coaching, I mastered DISC, learned how different people communicate and make decisions, and went through Tony's programs.

Long before that, Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude taught me that success has a structure you can study. I've been a student ever since.

## 7. Personal Positioning

People form an impression of you before you say a word, so you should shape it deliberately.

That's why my channel carries The Iconic Interview Series with Tammy name. Positioning creates clarity around the message you want to send.

## 8. Market Relevance

To serve the people who matter to your mission, you must stay relevant to them without becoming the loudest voice in the room.

My channel began in fitness and bodybuilding, and I kept that foundation while widening its focus to personal growth and the people who have shaped their industries.

I meet people where they are now instead of where I was when I started.

## 9. Energetic Capacity

A long career takes stamina, and stamina is built. Living in 25 cities in five years taught me to protect my energy, keep my routines steady and start fresh every eight weeks without burning out.

I didn't just survive that pace. I built a muscle from it, and I still draw on it today.

## 10. Completion and Contribution

Knowing when something is truly finished also means knowing what you want it remembered for.

In 2007, I had the chance to interview Joe Weider, a man who helped shape the world of bodybuilding and fitness. Years later, I dedicated my channel to iconic figures.

In 2008, I had the good fortune of meeting landscape photographer Peter Lik after a publisher friend told me I needed to meet him. I interviewed Peter and then proposed an inspirational twist: pairing his photography with motivational messages I would write for a line of greeting cards. He said yes. The idea became a way to connect art with encouragement, and I still use cards at presentations, asking audience members to write to someone who needs to be uplifted and send it to them.

In 2009, I met Evander Holyfield through business and told him what I believed: He deserved to be seen as more than a fighter; he was an iconic figure. That conversation led to my involvement in managing entertainment projects connected to him.

One project grew from a simple idea. I told Evander I envisioned a fine-art collection built around powerful portraits in his likeness, complete with his autograph. We created the collection, and I watched him sign the pieces - an unforgettable moment that brought together branding, storytelling, art and legacy.

The goal is to have conversations and create work that continue contributing to something bigger. That's what completion means to me: not just finishing, but making sure what you finish keeps giving.

## Current Projects and Purpose

Today, that philosophy continues to shape the projects I choose. My current work includes Siren Sisters Productions, a creative venture centered on stories and productions with depth, intention and feminine influence, as well as Signature Conversation, an intimate conversation and media-coaching concept designed to help leaders and creatives reveal the human story behind their public roles.

I am also developing The Iconic Heel, a made-to-order statement piece featuring real gemstones set by hand into the heel. To me, it represents the same idea that runs through so much of my work: create something intentionally, make it meaningful and resist the pressure to make everything ordinary or mass-produced.

My interview work continues that mission, too. Whether the format is a stage, a camera or a one-on-one conversation, I am most interested in what sits beneath a person's title - the decisions, reinventions, failures, values and relationships that shaped who they became.

## Giving Back

Service has always mattered to me because success means more when it can be used to encourage someone else. Today, the causes closest to my heart include the Jessie Rees Foundation, whose Never Ever Give Up message brings hope to children fighting cancer; St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and its work for children and families facing serious illness; and The Animal Foundation here in Las Vegas, which protects vulnerable animals in our community. Children, animals and people moving through difficult seasons remind me why encouragement matters. Philanthropy isn't separate from my work. It is part of the same calling: use your voice, relationships and resources to leave people better than you found them.

## BOOKING INFORMATION

To contact Tammy for speaking engagements or PR, please call

**Bruce Merrin, Celebrity Speakers Bureau, at**

**702-768-8204**

*"Bruce Merrin's Celebrity Speakers & Entertainment is celebrating our 53rd anniversary. We have booked all of the legendary speakers: Dr. Wayne Dyer, Bob Proctor, Richard Branson, Steve Jobs and Jack Canfield, plus every past President of the United States beginning with President Ronald Reagan. Our first two sports clients were Jackie Robinson and Muhammad Ali, and we frequently booked Johnny Carson, Michael Landon and Robin Williams. Tammy Lier rests on my Mt. Rushmore among the best speakers I have ever witnessed."*

— Bruce Merrin, Bruce Merrin's Celebrity Speakers & Entertainment







# Making a Splash... and History

Doodlepalooza Brings the Community Together for Doodle Rescue USA  
and a Guinness World Records Title





**F**or Cowabunga Vegas Waterparks, making a splash in Southern Nevada has always meant more than summer fun. Through Cowabunga Cares, the parks have become places where the community can come together, build meaningful partnerships and support organizations making a difference across the Las Vegas Valley.

On Sept. 27, that mission went to the dogs — literally — when Doodlepalooza 2026 took over Cowabunga Canyon for an unforgettable afternoon benefiting Doodle Rescue USA. The inaugural dog-friendly splash day brought doodles and poodle mixes together with their families for a celebration built around rescue, community and a whole lot of fun.

## This record belongs to every dog and person who showed up for a larger purpose.

### Doodlepalooza did more than make a splash. It made history.

A total of 296 dogs gathered at Cowabunga Vegas, earning the Guinness World Records title for the most dogs attending a dog pool party. A Guinness World Records adjudicator was on site to verify the count, which surpassed the previous record of 276 dogs set in Coral Gables, Florida, in May. We Love Doodles, the event's presenting sponsor, was officially recognized as the record holder.

The record-setting moment added an extraordinary milestone to a day that already had a much bigger purpose: raising awareness and support for dogs in need.

During the event, doodles splashed through the wave pool, kiddie area and splash pad while families gathered throughout the park's grassy spaces. The unusual sight of hundreds of dogs enjoying a waterpark created a joyful backdrop for Doodle Rescue USA's mission of rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming doodles and poodle mixes.

Proceeds from Doodlepalooza supported the nonprofit's rescue operations, including veterinary treatment, professional grooming, foster placement, transportation, behavioral assessments and adoption services. The event also gave Doodle Rescue USA an opportunity to introduce more Southern Nevada families to the importance of rescue, fostering, responsible pet companionship and adoption.

"Achieving this record gives us a chance to celebrate something historic while also drawing attention to the rescue work happening every day behind the scenes," said Sheedvash Michael Zargari of Doodle Rescue USA.

For Cowabunga Cares, the partnership demonstrated what can happen when a local business uses its resources and space to create an experience that serves the community in a meaningful way. Cowabunga Vegas was able to offer something beyond a traditional sponsorship: a place where hundreds of families could gather, connect and turn awareness into action.



“

*Achieving this record gives us a chance to celebrate something historic while also drawing attention to the rescue work happening every day behind the scenes.*

”



That community support matters because rescue often involves far more than finding a dog a new home. Many animals require medical care, grooming, transportation, behavioral support and weeks or months with foster families before they are ready for adoption. Events such as Doodlepalooza help provide the funding and visibility needed to support each step of that journey.

"This record belongs to every dog and person who showed up for a larger purpose," said Danielle Dunker of Doodle Rescue USA. "This gives hundreds of doodle families a chance to celebrate together while helping us raise awareness for the dogs who still need rescue, foster families and forever homes."

The inaugural Doodlepalooza proved that a community fundraiser can be memorable, meaningful and historic all at once. What began as a dog-friendly day at the waterpark became a record-setting celebration of the people, businesses, volunteers and families willing to show up for animals that need a second chance.

For Cowabunga Cares and Doodle Rescue USA, the impact of the day will continue long after the pools have emptied and the paw prints have dried.



Stay tuned for more information about upcoming events and opportunities to support Doodle Rescue USA through fostering, volunteering, donating and future community partnerships. To learn more about the rescue and its mission, visit **DoodleRescueUSA.org**. Learn more about Cowabunga Vegas Waterparks at **CowabungaVegas.com**.

“

*Most people have never seen a boot made by hand. We want people to experience what real craftsmanship looks like.”*

## KEEPING AN AMERICAN CRAFT ALIVE, ONE PAIR OF BOOTS AT A TIME



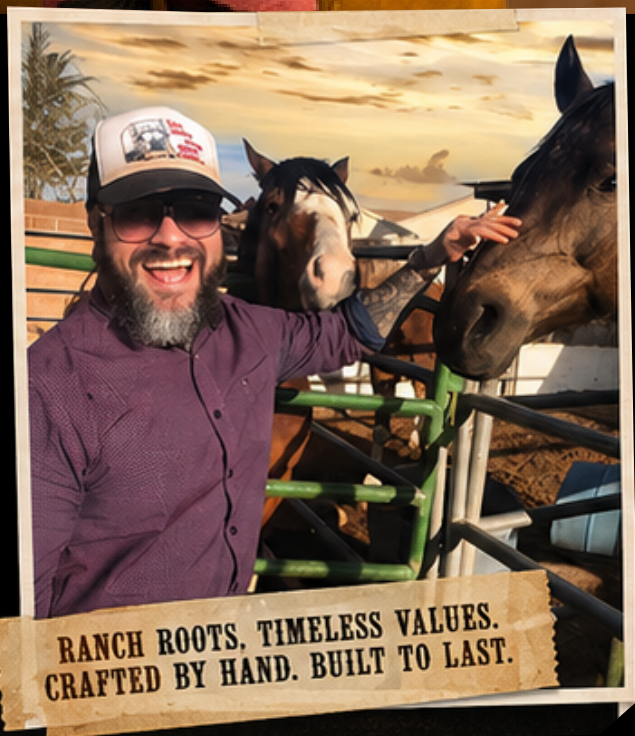
By Gerard Ramalho  
*Award-Winning Nevada Journalist*

**I**n an era of mass production and disposable products, Javier Martell is doing something increasingly rare: making boots the same way they were crafted more than a century ago.

The Las Vegas native and owner of Old Country Boots has opened a new workshop and retail location inside Neonopolis on Fremont Street, where visitors can watch Martell and his team handcraft custom boots from start to finish. It's an up-close look at a tradition that has largely disappeared in modern America.

"Most people have never seen a boot made by hand," Martell said. "They've only seen what's on store shelves. We want people to experience what real craftsmanship looks like."

Martell is among only a handful of bootmakers in the United States who continue to build boots using many of the traditional methods practiced in the 1800s. Every pair is







custom measured, custom fitted and handcrafted using premium materials selected for durability instead of mass-market pricing. Each pair is also backed by a lifetime warranty.

His philosophy is simple: Boots are tools.

"They're supposed to work for you, get more comfortable with age and last a lifetime," he said. "That's how boots were originally intended to be made."

That philosophy has been passed down through generations. Martell's grandfather, a bootmaker from Sonora, Mexico, was deeply rooted in ranching and rodeo culture.

Those early influences helped shape Martell's appreciation for craftsmanship, hard work and the cowboy way of life. Today, Martell and his wife continue that tradition by raising horses of their own.

Growing up in Las Vegas and graduating from Rancho High School, Martell never imagined his hobby would become a

successful business. What began in a garage eventually attracted ranchers, rodeo competitors, working cowboys and celebrities seeking one-of-a-kind custom boots.

While many modern boot manufacturers rely on mass production, Martell believes custom boot making is about creating something deeply personal.

"When someone orders a pair of boots, I'm not just thinking about measurements," he said. "I'm thinking about who that person is, how they'll use them and what story they want those boots to tell."

A renewed interest in cowboy culture has fueled demand in recent years. Television hits such as Yellowstone and Landman, along with the growing popularity of country music and Mexican Norteño culture, have introduced a new generation to Western traditions.

While custom boots remain the foundation of his business, Martell and his team also handcraft premium leather handbags, belts, wallets and other leather goods using the same commitment to quality, durability and traditional craftsmanship that defines every pair of Old Country Boots.

Yet for Martell, the appeal extends far beyond fashion.

"Cowboy culture is part of who I am," he said. "It's in my DNA. My goal isn't just to sell boots. It's to preserve a tradition that's disappearing."

At his new Fremont Street location, visitors can witness that mission firsthand as leather is transformed into heirloom-quality boots built not only for today, but for generations to come.

In a world where so many products are designed to be replaced, Martell is creating something meant to endure. Every pair represents dozens of hours of skilled craftsmanship, generations of knowledge and a belief that quality still matters. It's more than a business, it's a commitment to preserving an American tradition that refuses to be forgotten.

"It's about preserving a piece of American history," Martell said. "As long as I'm able, I'll keep making boots the right way."





# The ONE-HOUR Destination Wedding:

WHY VEGAS COUPLES ARE  
LOOKING BEYOND THE STRIP







For Las Vegas couples planning a wedding, “destination” does not necessarily have to mean getting on a plane. With wedding costs continuing to climb nationwide, couples are becoming more strategic about where they celebrate, how many people they invite and which elements of the traditional wedding experience are worth the expense.

That shift is creating an interesting alternative for Southern Nevadans: destinations close enough to drive to, but far enough away to feel like a getaway.

Just over an hour north of Las Vegas, Mesquite is emerging as one of those options. The timing is particularly relevant. According to The Knot’s 2026 Real Weddings Study, the average wedding now costs approximately \$34,200, and more than 85% of couples say the economy has affected their wedding planning. For couples trying to balance the wedding they want with the budget they have, that can require rethinking the traditional formula.

CasaBlanca Resort & Casino in Mesquite recently introduced a \$4,300 wedding package designed around that shift. Rather than stripping down the experience, the package bundles many of the expenses couples would otherwise have to source and budget for individually.

The Signature Collection includes a ceremony for up to 50 guests at The Grove, CasaBlanca’s newly added outdoor wedding venue, along with a private banquet room, catered dinner, professional officiant, 8-inch wedding cake and event setup, including chair covers, table linens and house centerpiece arrangements. A two-night stay in one of the resort’s newly remodeled king suites is also included.

At CasaBlanca, the ceremony, reception, accommodations and weekend activities can take place within the same resort environment. The property has been undergoing a multimillion-dollar renovation that has introduced refreshed accommodations and new amenities, including The Grove.

Beyond the wedding, couples and their guests have access to the resort’s lagoon-style pool, full-service spa, golf and several dining options.

The \$4,300 price point also puts the economics into perspective. With the national average wedding exceeding \$34,000, a more affordable approach can give couples greater predictability before they begin planning.

For some couples, luxury is no longer synonymous with spending as much as possible. Instead, it can mean having a beautiful outdoor ceremony, staying in a newly remodeled suite and spending the weekend with the people closest to them — without beginning married life with an unnecessarily large bill.

# \$4,300

## WEDDING PACKAGE



For more information about CasaBlanca’s wedding packages, visit [casablanca.playmesquite.com/weddings](https://casablanca.playmesquite.com/weddings).



# The Secret to Putting *Healthy Family Meals* on the Table, Even on Your Busiest Days

Whether you're juggling a demanding work schedule, balancing a packed family calendar or simply looking for an easier way to eat healthier, finding time to plan, shop for and prepare nutritious meals isn't always easy. As schedules become increasingly hectic, meal planning is often one of the first healthy habits to fall by the wayside, especially for parents settling back into the school-year routine.

Stephano's Greek & Mediterranean Grill is helping make healthy eating more attainable with chef-driven Mediterranean meal prep designed for those seeking a convenient, balanced meal solution. By taking much of the work out of meal planning, grocery shopping and cooking, the fresh meal-prep packages offer another way to enjoy wholesome, restaurant-quality meals throughout the week.

Since 1998, Stephano's has served fresh Mediterranean cuisine made with quality ingredients. Its chef-driven meal prep brings that same approach to convenient dining. Prepared fresh in-house using olive and avocado oils, the meals feature clean ingredients, no seed oils and dressings made without added sugar.

One featured family meal includes a half tray of rice prepared with 100% real butter alongside 10 skewers of marinated chicken prepared with olive oil. Designed to feed five to seven people, the package offers an easy option for family dinners, with the potential for leftovers for lunches or additional meals throughout the week.

Families can pair the meal with Stephano's organic Power Green kale tabbouleh, Mediterranean chopped salad or house-made hummus for a Mediterranean-inspired spread. The Mediterranean diet, which emphasizes vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats, is widely recognized for its potential health benefits.

For parents, that convenience can be especially valuable during the school year, but the appeal extends beyond families. Busy professionals, students, fitness enthusiasts and anyone looking to simplify mealtime can benefit from having fresh, balanced meals ready to enjoy.

With four locations across the Las Vegas Valley; in Henderson, the Blue Diamond area, southwest Las Vegas, and Summerlin, Stephano's Greek & Mediterranean Grill offers a convenient option for those looking to incorporate Mediterranean meals into a busy schedule.



For hours, locations, and the full menu, visit



[stephanoslv.com](http://stephanoslv.com)



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Denise became interested in hair restoration because of her own hair loss at the age of 16.

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# THE TWO HOUR *Reset*

**L**as Vegas locals spend their lives in a destination where millions of people save their vacation days to visit. Yet when burnout hits, our instinct is often the same as everyone else's: We need to get out of town.

But what if feeling like you got away didn't require a flight, hotel room, or even an entire day off? Enter the two-hour reset.

As Americans become increasingly protective of their time, shorter wellness experiences are creating a middle ground between pushing through an exhausting week and planning an entire vacation. For Las Vegas locals, there is an added advantage: Some of the resort amenities people travel from around the world to experience are right in our backyard.

Virgin Hotels Las Vegas is tapping into that idea with its Mini Retreat at The Spa, a two-hour wellness experience designed to give guests a concentrated opportunity to step away, slow down and recharge.

The two-hour format is what makes the concept particularly appealing. A traditional spa day can become an event in itself, but a Mini Retreat can realistically fit into an ordinary day. For locals balancing careers, families and calendars that rarely seem to slow down, two hours can be considerably easier to find than two days.



“

## Step away, slow down and recharge.



It could fit between school drop-off and pickup, into an afternoon away from the office or into a weekend without requiring the logistics and expense of leaving town. There is also something uniquely Las Vegas about being able to do it inside a luxury resort.

Virgin Hotels Las Vegas sits just off the Strip, offering the feeling of getting away without some of the hassles locals may associate with heading to Las Vegas Boulevard. Self-parking is complimentary, and the property's location can make it relatively easy to access from different parts of the Las Vegas Valley.

Once inside The Spa, the pace changes. The space is designed around relaxation and restoration, with massage and skin therapies alongside a Roman-style bath experience. The Mini Retreat creates a defined two-hour window to step away from the normal routine and experience resort-style wellness without turning it into an overnight stay.

Two hours is only one way locals can use the resort. For those with more time, full-day spa passes are also available, creating an option for a longer reset without booking a hotel room. When two hours, or even one day, isn't enough, the property also offers the possibility of a full Las Vegas staycation.

The wellness experiences extend beyond a traditional spa day. One example is monthly Puppy Yoga, held in partnership with Wagging Tails Rescue. The experience combines a guided yoga class with adoptable puppies roaming throughout the room.

It's playful, but it also reflects how the definition of wellness has expanded. Feeling better doesn't always require a serious retreat or rigid routine. Sometimes it can mean movement, disconnecting from your phone, and doing something that simply makes you happy.

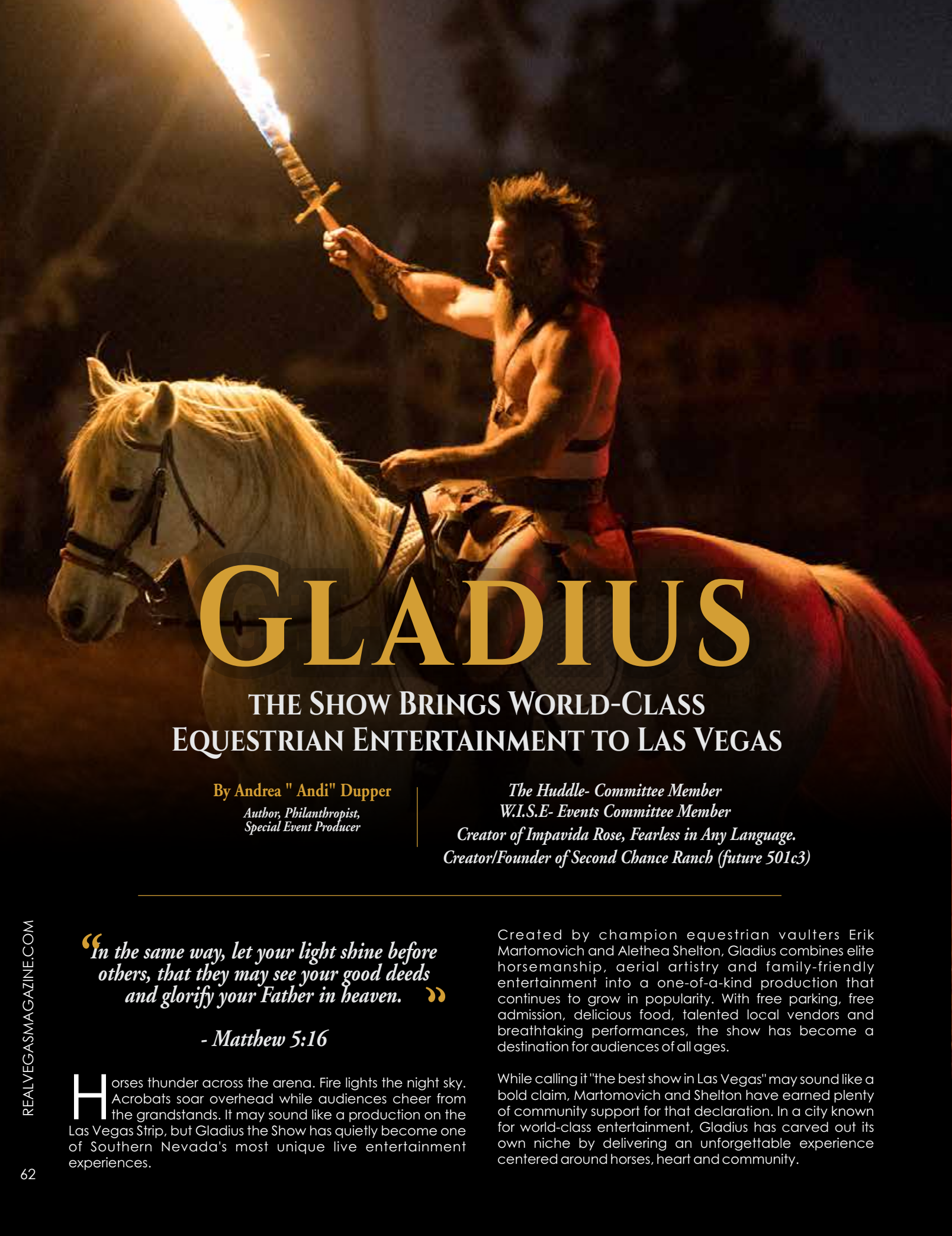


For a different kind of reset, additional wellness services are available through The Spa, including VEMI, a touchless experience that incorporates vibroacoustic technology, electromagnetic fields, and infrared heat. IV hydration therapy is also available through LIV Wellness, giving locals several ways to customize their wellness experience.

A two-hour spa experience isn't meant to replace a vacation. But it does challenge the idea that we have to wait for one before giving ourselves permission to slow down.

Because when you live in Las Vegas, getting away doesn't always mean leaving town. Sometimes, two hours and a short drive are all you need to feel a world away.





# GLADIUS

THE SHOW BRINGS WORLD-CLASS  
EQUESTRIAN ENTERTAINMENT TO LAS VEGAS

By Andrea "Andi" Dupper

*Author, Philanthropist,  
Special Event Producer*

*The Huddle- Committee Member*

*W.I.S.E- Events Committee Member*

*Creator of Impavida Rose, Fearless in Any Language.*

*Creator/Founder of Second Chance Ranch (future 501c3)*

*“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

*- Matthew 5:16*

Horses thunder across the arena. Fire lights the night sky. Acrobats soar overhead while audiences cheer from the grandstands. It may sound like a production on the Las Vegas Strip, but Gladius the Show has quietly become one of Southern Nevada's most unique live entertainment experiences.

Created by champion equestrian vaulters Erik Martomovich and Alethea Shelton, Gladius combines elite horsemanship, aerial artistry and family-friendly entertainment into a one-of-a-kind production that continues to grow in popularity. With free parking, free admission, delicious food, talented local vendors and breathtaking performances, the show has become a destination for audiences of all ages.

While calling it "the best show in Las Vegas" may sound like a bold claim, Martomovich and Shelton have earned plenty of community support for that declaration. In a city known for world-class entertainment, Gladius has carved out its own niche by delivering an unforgettable experience centered around horses, heart and community.





To understand the show's success, you have to start at the beginning.

Martomovich began riding horses at just 3 years old. As he grew older, his fearless riding style caught the attention of his parents, who introduced him to equestrian vaulting as a teenager. His competitive spirit quickly took over, and by age 13, he had set his sights on becoming a national champion. He sold his Quarter Horse, purchased a Belgian horse, dedicated himself to training and soon began collecting national titles.

Shelton began competing in equestrian vaulting at age 10. During a career that spanned two decades, she earned seven national championships in team competition and pas de deux, an equestrian discipline performed by two horse-and-rider teams working in synchronized harmony.

Not surprisingly, Martomovich and Shelton crossed paths early in their competitive careers and continued performing together for years. Both became members of Cavalia, the internationally acclaimed live equestrian production created by one of the co-founders of Cirque du Soleil.

In 2012, the duo was approached by investors interested in developing a high-energy equestrian production. Following a brief touring run, they returned to Las Vegas, where the vision for Gladius the Show began taking shape. They spent several years touring while opening dress rehearsals at their Las Vegas ranch to the public, allowing the community an early glimpse into what the production would eventually become.

In 2019, Gladius presented a one-night performance at South Point Hotel Casino & Spa while a film crew documented the production for a planned reality television series. Like countless live entertainment productions around the world, however, Gladius was forced to pause during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*“Gladius has carved out its own niche by delivering an unforgettable experience centered around horses, heart and community.”*

Determined to continue their mission, Martomovich and Shelton founded BHP Events, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing transformative equestrian experiences that promote healing, education and empowerment throughout Southern Nevada. The nonprofit also rescues and cares for several horses that now perform in Gladius.

The community has embraced the production.

During this past May's "The Last Ride of Spring" performances, demand became so overwhelming that organizers added additional shows and expanded seating with more bleachers to accommodate growing audiences.

Despite its increasing popularity, Gladius remains committed to offering free admission. Guests are simply encouraged to make a donation, whatever they are able, to support BHP Events and help provide care for the horses and maintain the ranch.

Free parking. Free admission. Great food. Local artisans. Extraordinary horses. Talented performers.

Gladius the Show has become far more than an evening of entertainment. It has become a place where families, friends and visitors from every walk of life can gather, regardless of economic circumstances, to experience world-class performances while celebrating the powerful connection between people, horses and community.



# Choosing THE RIGHT PET

A LIFETIME DECISION, NOT AN IMPULSE

BY **TWO BY TWO PET SUPPORT** | COMPASSION WHEN IT MATTERS MOST.

Bringing a pet into your home is one of life's greatest joys—but it should also be one of its most thoughtful decisions. Every year, countless dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, and other companion animals are surrendered to shelters simply because they weren't the right match for their family. The truth is, there is no "perfect" pet—only the pet that's right for your lifestyle.

## *Don't Choose with Your Eyes Alone*

Too often, people choose a pet based on appearance, popularity, or social media trends. A fluffy Husky puppy may look adorable, but that same dog will grow into an energetic, intelligent breed that requires daily exercise, mental stimulation, and plenty of space. A Bengal cat may have a stunning coat, but they're incredibly active and curious, often needing far more engagement than the average house cat.



## *Ask Yourself the Right Questions*

Before falling in love with a breed, ask yourself some honest questions:

- *How much time can I dedicate every day?*
- *Am I looking for a hiking companion or a couch cuddle buddy?*
- *Do I travel frequently?*
- *Are there young children or other pets in my home?*
- *Can I comfortably afford food, grooming, veterinary care, and unexpected medical expenses?*

## *Think Beyond the Puppy or Kitten Stage*

Remember, a pet's needs don't disappear after the puppy or kitten stage. Many dogs and cats live 10–20 years, making pet ownership a long-term commitment that should fit your future, not just your present.

## *Every Animal Has Its Own Personality*

Personality matters just as much as breed. Even within the same breed, **every animal is unique**. Spending time getting to know an individual pet—especially if you're adopting—can help ensure a better match than simply choosing based on looks alone.





## Why Adoption Deserves a Second Look

It's also worth considering **adoption**. Shelters and rescue organizations are filled with incredible animals waiting for a second chance. Staff and foster families often know each pet's personality and can help match you with one that complements your lifestyle and expectations.

## A Decision That Changes Two Lives

Choosing the right pet isn't just about making your life easier—it's about **giving an animal the stable, loving home it deserves**. A thoughtful decision today can prevent stress, behavioral issues, or even the heartbreaking experience of rehoming a beloved companion later.

## A Veterinarian's Perspective

As veterinarians who decided to work in the end-of-life niche, we see the consequences of rushed decisions far more often than we'd like. We frequently care for young dogs and cats who should be enjoying the happiest years of their lives but instead are in pain because they were underestimated. They're labeled as "**too demanding**," "**too energetic**," or "**too much work**."

In many cases, what fades isn't the animal's value—it's the human commitment to meeting its physical, emotional, and medical needs.

Sometimes these situations can still be turned around with education, patience, and support. Other times, prolonged neglect or unmet needs lead to health and behavioral problems that become far more difficult—or even impossible—to reverse. **The highest price is always paid by the animal**, who has no voice to advocate for itself and places complete trust in the people who chose to bring it home.



## A Decision That Lasts a Lifetime

That's why we encourage families to pause before making such an important decision. Choosing a pet shouldn't be an emotional impulse—it should be a thoughtful commitment based on what you can realistically provide, not just today, but for years to come.

While no one can predict the future, taking the time to honestly evaluate your lifestyle, finances, schedule, and expectations **gives both you and your future companion the greatest chance of a happy life together**.



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## REAL VEGAS®

was proud to co-host Sip & Succeed at MACEOO at ARIA on June 4, alongside Dress for Success Southern Nevada and MACEOO Paris. The special co-ed evening brought our community together to network, connect and celebrate members of the Women Who Wow and Most Magnificent Men, while supporting Dress for Success Southern Nevada's Little Black Dress and Black-Tie programs.

A special thank you to Roxanne McCoy, Kassidy, Ricci Lopez, Angela Brooks, Kimani Brooks Consulting, the Real Vegas team, our panelists, sponsors, supporters and everyone who helped make this inspiring evening of education, empowerment and community possible.

*Photos Courtesy of Michael W. Rogers Photography*









## REAL VEGAS®

Celebrated an unforgettable evening honoring some of the remarkable Women Who Wow who help make our community so special. Hosted at D'Agostino's Trattoria on Friday, May 8, the 2026 Women Who Wow Recognition Dinner brought together an inspiring group of local leaders, entrepreneurs, professionals and changemakers for an intimate evening of recognition, connection and celebration. Guests enjoyed the incredible hospitality, cuisine and atmosphere D'Agostino's is known for as we raised a glass to phenomenal women making a meaningful impact throughout Las Vegas. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined us and helped make the evening one to remember.

*Photo Credit: Michael W. Rogers Photography*









## REAL VEGAS<sup>®</sup>

Flavor Flav's inaugural **SHE Weekend** brought more than 100 elite female athletes to Las Vegas for a powerful celebration of women in sports. The weekend kicked off with a Las Vegas Strip parade, a Keys to the Strip presentation and a proclamation officially naming July 16 "**Flavor Flav Day.**" Flav also brought his family onstage, adding a meaningful personal moment to the celebration.

Among those recognized were Hilary Knight, Alex Carpenter, Laila Edwards, Alysa Liu, Amber Glenn, Madison Chock, Erin Jackson, Ilona Maher, Hayley Scamurra, Mystique Ro, Cayla Barnes, Hannah Bilka, Kelly Pannek, Lee Stecklein and Grace Zumwinkle, among many other accomplished athletes.

The festivities included a live performance by **Public Enemy** and a surprise appearance by **Montell Jordan** at the official after-party. From Olympians and Paralympians to rising stars, SHE Weekend put women's sports center stage in Las Vegas.

*Photo Credit: Michael W. Rogers Photography*



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