

A Legacy Local Monthly Publication

December 2023

# The Historic

Mesilla Valley

Explore Mesilla Valley's Wine Scene for the Holidays

Looking forward to 2024 in Dona Ana County

Tips from a Socialite

Save the Date  
Día de los Reyes  
Nativity Event

# Highlighting

## 'Tis the Season de Mesilla





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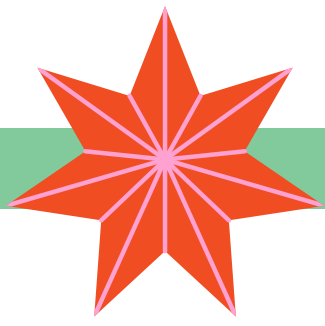
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LIVE JAZZ BY:

**ROBERT OJINAGA QUARTET**





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## Submissions

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# A NOTE FROM THE publisher

We are proud to announce we have added more writers to our team for further community outreach and variations in tone for our readership. It's been a crazy end of November just having come off the campaign trail, then to see my parents off, and my sister swiftly returning with Ryan and Jonathan for Thanksgiving. I spent the four days preceding the holiday preparing the myriad of dishes I'd be laying out for us to enjoy. My sister even remarked how calm I was this year, the secret's in the prep four days' worth, nonetheless here we are or were enjoying a feast fit for kings with a collection of silver serve from as far back as the late 1800s.

It was a strange surprise the day after Thanksgiving that my father called and said he had come across our bound family book, which was somewhere amongst the archives we inherited after my grandmother's untimely death. It seems all we've done as a family is setup the antiques, silver serve-crystal, and archives, but not quite sorted the archives.

The surprise is our family's first ancestor on the European side was a survivor of the Mayflower, which makes sense since our father loves bland and traditional turkeys. We've known for generations about our Metis (Red River Valley Indigenous Peoples) heritage and about the

first livable structure our European forbears built in Monterey, Michigan, especially since some of the buildings still stand and our family traded the hotel with our Native American ancestors for their general store.

For our December issue we will be spotlighting shopping local as this month's cover sponsor "Tis the Season de Mesilla," taking a look at 2024 with both the CEO of the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce and the Chairwoman of the Dona Ana County Commission to see what they hope will come under new leadership at the city, and showcasing the upcoming Nativity Event which supports public art along the El Camino Real within the Mesquite Historic District.

I would like to give a special thank you to our community partners and readers who make each and every issue possible, enabling us to celebrate six months of publication with this issue. I have mentioned before that I grew up in the newspaper industry and I got a text asking if I missed stuffing newspapers this Thanksgiving, and my response I sure do.

It seems stuffing newspapers with advertising inserts has been something of a ritual since I was in the eighth grade. Back then, of course, we had hundreds of contractors and hundreds of thousands of square feet worth of

warehouse space spread across the city. Today, our big show is confined to an addition slapped on this newspaper more than 20 years ago and my job was to work the mail room. On the big day, I directed our crew, which meant three-into-one inserting by hand. I may add I made the best time in 2019 in the paper's history for stuffing and while my OCD inclinations caused some arguments, I knew the platform and design of the stuffing design was both attractive and efficient.

This year, most of the commercial accounts are gone and the paper is no longer a daily. With each crank of the press, I see more of the industry I love so much falling into the shadows. My father's face still lights up when he is able to give a tour of the great machines that built his career and our family's heritage. He doesn't know it, but we see it, too.

I also realize and see the dire straits newspapers across this great nation are facing. Everyone must realize hardcopy reporting is the last form of true news while each paper carries its own political focus, it's built from true reporting not media conglomerates spewing untruths. That's how I built The Historic Mesilla Valley Magazine. I knew what our community was missing and I knew the health of our local newspapers. That's why I made it my mission to anchor this publication in the heart of community. Print is still alive and I'm grateful to have been able to make this career shift and begin again with this monthly publication. Happy Holidays to all of our readers from Courtney, Rusty, and myself here at The Historic and remember shop local this holiday. Our publication depends on it and so do our local businesses.



# Calendar of events

## Thru Jan. 13, 2024

– Exhibition: The Amadors: Family, Culture and Identity In Early Las Cruces. The Amadors were among the first families to settle in Las Cruces in about 1850. This exhibit follows their experience of Mexican families living along the U.S. side of the international boundary following the Mexican American War. Exhibit is open from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. at the Branigan Cultural Center, 501 N. Main Street, Las Cruces.

## Dec. 6-9

– Festival of the Cranes. Sandhill cranes migrate to the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge from Canada. The festival is packed with expert seminars, field workshops, and even a Wildlife Zone showcasing rehabilitated birds and reptiles with a variety of exhibits; 1001 NM-1, San Antonio, N.M.

## Dec. 8

– Holiday at the Depot. Visit the Railroad Museum for its annual open house, “Holiday at the Depot,” featuring holiday decorations and the sparkle of winter. This event is free and no registration is required; 351 N. Mesilla Ave., Las Cruces.

– Luminarias: Light up the Desert. Join the Asombro Institute at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park for this annual event. Participants

may stroll along a paved ADA-accessible trail lit with more than 400 luminarias while the sun sets in the surrounding desert. Cookies and hot chocolate, roast a marshmallow, view Saturn and Jupiter through a telescope, and caroling are featured. A suggested donation of \$5 per person or \$10 per family is recommended, though the event is free and no registration is required; 56501 N. Jornada Road, Las Cruces.

## Dec. 8-17

– The Nutcracker. Borderlands Ballet Company is collaborating with the Paso del Norte Chamber Orchestra (Maestro Jorge Martinez-Rios, Conductor) for a night of dance and live music. General admission is \$15 and the show begins at 5 p.m.; 1000 E. University Ave., Las Cruces.

## Dec. 9-29

– Valley Pizza on the Paradise Patio featuring Nicole O., Taylor Paul, Santana Garcia, and Ferguson Burt. All events are 6-9 p.m., at 3100 W. Picacho Ave, Las Cruces.

## Dec. 10

– Hanukah on the Plaza. A free Hanukah service on the plaza from 6-8 p.m., Plaza de Las Cruces.

## Dec. 14

– New Mexico State Aggies vs. New Mexico Lobos game, 7 p.m., Pan Am Center, 1810 E. University Ave., Las Cruces. Tickets range between \$31 to \$87.

## Dec. 15

– Noche de Las Luminarias at Fort Selden Historic Site with more than 900 luminarias that outline the Fort’s footprint. There will be a campfire, holiday crafts, and family friendly activities. The event is 5-8:30 p.m., 1280 Fort Selden Road, Radium Springs, N.M. Tickets for the event can be purchased now by visiting <https://my.nmculture.org>. Dress warmly as it gets cold. Adults are \$7 and children 16 and under are free. Call (575) 526-8911

for additional information.

## Dec. 19

– Farm La-La. The Farm & Ranch Museum is hosting its second-annual Farm La-La, featuring thousands of lights around the 47-acre Museum, trolley rides, crafts, cookie-decorating, hot chocolate, and s’mores. Pets are not allowed. Event is from 4-6 p.m., with an admission fee of \$5 per family; 4100 Dripping Springs Road, Las Cruces.

## Dec. 23

– Merry-Achi Christmas. Mariachi Sol de Mexico comprises a 13-piece ensemble that celebrates one of Mexico’s most impressive pieces of cultural heritage. Doors open at 6 p.m. with the show commencing at 7 p.m. at the Plaza Theater, 125 W. Mills Ave., El Paso, Texas.

## Dec. 24

– Christmas Carols and Luminarias on the Plaza. Thousands of luminarias line the streets of Mesilla. While on the Plaza, carolers sing, vigils are held, and hot chocolate and cookies are consumed to celebrate the holiday season! This free outdoor event will be from 5-7 p.m., Mesilla.

## Dec. 31

– Las Cruces Chile Drop. This annual event features live music, food trucks, vendors, and of course the dropping of a 19-foot chrome chile pepper adorned with 400 feet of LED lights. This free outdoor event begins at 9 p.m., 100 N. Main Street, Las Cruces.

## Jan. 6, 2024

– Día de los Reyes Nativity Event, from 12-4 p.m. located at 706 B South Mesquite Street. This is a self-guided tour with a brochure and docents to provide additional information. A suggested \$5 donation per person will help increase the artists fund to commission public art in the Mesquite Original Townsite Historic District.



## EXPLORE MESILLA VALLEY'S WINE SCENE

# for the holidays

Provided by Mesilla Valley Wine & Brew Tours

**M**esilla Valley Wine & Brew Tours is set to elevate your holiday experience with a captivating exploration of the Mesilla Valley's flourishing wine scene. Founded in the summer of 2023, this unique experience has quickly become a beacon for those seeking an immersive journey into the heart of Southern New Mexico.

As the oldest wine-producing region in the U.S., New Mexico boasts a winemaking legacy spanning nearly four centuries.

Presently, it hosts more than 50 wineries, 12 of which are nestled between Radium Springs, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas in the Mesilla Valley. Mesilla Valley Wine & Brew Tours emerged with a mission to bridge the gap between enthusiasts and the remarkable craftsmanship of local winemakers. Stephanie Hawkins, the

owner, underscores their dedication to creating experiences that cater to every palate and foster a deeper appreciation for the art of winemaking.

Half-day wine tasting excursions navigate guests to three carefully selected wineries, painting a vivid tapestry of flavors and techniques. Participants are encouraged to secure their spot through the seamless registration process available on the [mvwineandbrewtours.com](http://mvwineandbrewtours.com) website. For those preferring a more intimate setting, private tours accommodating groups of up to 14 people are available, offering a personalized touch to elevate the holiday gifting experience.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, Mesilla Valley Wine & Brew Tours invites both locals and travelers to partake in an unforgettable journey of taste, culture, and the



celebration of artisanal craftsmanship. A wine tour amidst your holiday events adds elegance, taste exploration, camaraderie, and festive memories.

For inquiries or reservations, interested parties can reach out via phone at (575) 323-1825 or through email at [info@mvwineandbrewtours.com](mailto:info@mvwineandbrewtours.com). Embrace the holiday spirit and indulge in the gift of exceptional experiences with Mesilla Valley Wine & Brew Tours.







# HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

## ARTIST WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE ACT NOW WHILE SPACE IS AVAILABLE

Provided by Ten O'clock Artists

Looking for that really special holiday gift this year for yourself or a loved one? Consider a class or two from the new Las Cruces Artists' Workshop Week happening in March 2024 – only three months away. Why so early, you might ask? Space is extremely limited, typically between three and five slots, with some of the classes limited to 12 seats.

The week is sponsored by the Ten O'clock Artists, a group formed in Las Cruces in 2005 to share ideas and artwork and encourage members and the public to stop each day at 10 a.m. and devote time to art.

"Let's plan a Workshop Week!" exclaimed Gabriele Teich, a member artist of the group who recently returned from trekking in Australia, where the shire of Bellingen is a buzz each year with visitors and residents participating in a week of art workshops.

"The joy and vitality transformed the town, restaurants, shops, everything," Teich said. "Such fun it would be to spread art this way in Las Cruces."

Teich explained that a variety

of art workshops will be led by members and friends of the Ten O'clock artists. The art workshops comprise a myriad of types, techniques and modalities including bookbinding, encaustic painting, fabric rusting, basketry, two different forms of printmaking, mosaics, gourd art, jewelry wire wrapping, dance and painting, fused glass, paper marigolds, blown ink painting, and delving into art inspiration.

Workshop registration closes on March 11, 2024. The workshop series will be held from March 18-24, 2024. A schedule, class times, artists and topics, and costs are available online at [www.agavearts.com](http://www.agavearts.com) and click on the Artists' Workshop Week link at the upper left of the home page. Or contact LeeAnn Meadows by phone at 575-650-7009 or email at [info@agavearts.com](mailto:info@agavearts.com) for details or questions.



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By Robert Glenn Hopkins

# Highlighting

## TIS THE SEASON DE MESILLA

**D**eep in the heart of Mesilla lies a specialty store, a store like no other and definitely a one-of-a-kind treasure to

this area or any area for that matter, Tis the Season de Mesilla. This little gem of a specialty store focuses on,

you guessed it, the seasons and what comes with them. Year-round, from New Year's to Christmas, and every

holiday and season in between, no stone is left unturned as you're sure to find all the particular items and decor you're looking for.

With everyone's favorite holiday fast approaching too, Christmas, Tis the Season de Mesilla is in full swing. From the moment I stepped inside the establishment, I felt magically transported to a Winter Wonderland.

Was I at the North Pole? Was this Santa's factory? Filled with Christmas decor from wall to wall, one couldn't help but wonder where the elves were, and even Santa himself. To my amazement and wonder, I was overwhelmed as I was surrounded by Christmas spirit. Joy and happiness abound; this specialty store is truly extraordinary, and it's right here in Mesilla.





Now celebrating its 10th year, Tis the Season de Mesilla is renowned as a local specialty store. Something wonderful brought to you by none other than Mesilla Valley's own, Laura Romero. When asked what her motivation behind such a spectacular boutique was, the store owner said she loves the seasons and all the celebrating and decorating that go into them, and she just wanted to share those experiences with everyone. She gives thanks for the opportunity to her "Guardian Angel," Velia Chavez, who years ago came to Laura and asked her to make something of the place that's now Tis the Season de Mesilla, as at the time it was desperately in need of care and attention and, ironically, almost never was.

Had it not been for the creative insightfulness of Laura Romero, a local career Bookkeeper, who found herself at a crossroads in life, none of what is may have ever been. Laura wasn't sure what she'd do with the opportunity before her, but deep down inside she knew what her passion was. She absolutely loved the holidays and the seasons that accompanied them. She'd decorate her own home, and others would marvel at it in wonder and amazement. She knew this was her calling. Again, and with her passion in mind, she followed her heart and established a boutique that specifically specialized in the celebration of the seasons. The 33-year professional bookkeeping veteran went all in, never looking back and investing every penny she had. She worked relentlessly to bring

her love and joy of other seasons to others. Thank goodness too, as now it's available for all of us to share and enjoy as well, season upon season.

## Now celebrating its 10th year, Tis the Season de Mesilla

It's not always easy though, as Laura explained. Her bond with the community involves directly interacting with the community – the very personal way she loves living and doing business. She'd have it no other way but says the COVID-19 era was an extremely difficult time as it kept her from the community, and was a time that not only hurt many local business owners but also put them out of business. Laura and her closeness with the community allowed her to ride the storm though, and return stronger than ever.

Laura truly is an authority on seasons and holidays, and all that goes into them. She looks for the very best of seasonal and holiday decor and items. Often going to market and with a keen eye, Laura knows exactly what she's looking for. She knows what stands out and what makes a difference. It doesn't take but a few moments inside of Tis the Season de Mesilla to realize it, to feel it, to know, but it goes much further than that. There is a personal touch to all of this magic, if you will. Laura is very personally connected with the area and its people. That and

that alone is worth its weight in gold and the very reason to support this local treasure.

As if all that wasn't enough, and it really is, Laura and Tis the Season de Mesilla take it even a step further. Laura not only looks for the very best, but she looks for it locally, she seeks it out, she embraces it and she encourages it. She works to promote and invigorate locally. She motivates local involvement and yearns for it. She's a woman on a mission when it comes to all she does, and she does it all for the very area she lives in and loves, the local community. After all, specialty stores like this one are a rare treat anymore. Unique in just about every way. The personal touch and the attention to detail that go hand-in-hand with such establishments is truly something to behold and admire. Something you just don't hear about much anymore, let alone see and can actually appreciate. Hats off to Laura and Tis the Season de Mesilla for being just that. A local treasure we all love and support.

Please do remember to keep supporting our local specialty stores, Mesilla Valley. They are crucial for maintaining our vibrant communities and fostering a thriving local economy. These establishments play a significant role in shaping the very character and identity of our neighborhoods, offering unique products, personalized services, and a sense of connection that often eludes larger chain stores.





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# Looking forward to 2024 in Dona Ana County

By Sylvia Quintanilla

As 2024 rises on Dona Ana County, we look back at 2023 and the improvements our community has seen. In the past year, driving around our expanding city, you can see the boom of economic growth with new businesses. According to the City of Las Cruces website, as of November 2023, 532 businesses have either registered for a new business license or renewed their license. These licenses were issued for restaurants, entertainment or retail.



“The growth is unlike I’ve seen it before. It’s just coming very, very quickly. Which is good for our residents,” said Susana Chaparro, District 4 Commissioner – Chair for Dona Ana County, on the rapid growth in her district.

District 4 includes most of northeast Dona Ana County: East Mesa, Hacienda Acres, Metro Verde, High Range, Sonoma Ranch, Organ, Moongate and eastern areas of the City of Las Cruces.

However, with this growth, Chaparro does have concerns.

“What I do worry about is, of course I’m sure other people worry about, is to have housing that is obtainable for our locals. We do have a lot of people coming in from other parts of the country and that’s really impacting the housing

market,” Chaparro expressed.

Chaparro is nearing the end of her third year of her term as District 4 Commissioner – Chair. Her expertise is in the court system as she is a former judge. She noted that for the last 6 years, she has had a court interrupting firm to assist Spanish-speaking individuals in court. When hired, she is usually three to four seconds behind each speaker such as the judge, district attorney, witnesses, jury and defendants.

“The thing I am most proud of as a former judge was making sure that every single defendant that came before the court has access to justice and was tried by a jury of their peers,” Chaparro began.

She mentioned she was the first judge in the nation to incorporate Spanish-speaking jurors into the jury panel and that New Mexico is the only state that offers this.

“It’s to have true legal access to justice when you are able to participate fully in a hearing whether you are a juror passing judgment in person and you are one of their peers,” Chaparro explained.

Her time in the court system allows her to see improvements and changes happening in our county.

“I think we are moving in a better direction with our school district. I’ve seen positive impact on the kids because I see it in court and because of my job I am able to see how the educational system is going, how the housing (market) is going because they come to court. So many things that impact Dona Ana County,” Chaparro said.

Dona Ana County is in the mist of building the Dragonfly Dam in District 4 that is going to protect thousands of homes from potential floodwaters and run off from the Organ Mountains. This will affect Sonoma Ranch, Organ, Radium Spring and some of Dona Ana. This is a massive project that the county is working on and will be completed in stages. The amount to date that has been allotted from the New Mexico Legislation for Brahman Diversion Channel Extension is \$12 million. This channel

is to route the drainage waters to Isaac Lake.

“What’s really exciting for me is that it is going to be a huge ponding area. I am almost sure of it, it’s going to affect wildlife, there is going to be water for them. It’s going to be an area that is going to be wetter than the surface area around Isaac Lake,” Chaparro noted.

With an eye to the new year, Chaparro

**The growth is unlike I’ve seen it before. It’s just coming very, very quickly. Which is good for our residents**

hopes to see several changes in her district. She mentioned the commission just voted on new road infrastructure for each district that will be maintained by the county. That will allow residents to have more accessibility to come to the city.

With several residents up Highway 70, Chaparro hopes to work with Casa de Peregrinos and Lorenzo Alba, Jr. to come up with a way to have mobile services in the uncharted part of Dona Ana County. She is concerned that senior citizens that are unable to drive cannot get access to medications and food.

“I think that’s something that we need to start working on and we have to start working on very quickly so that we’re also taking care of our senior citizens,” Chaparro began. “Casa de Peregrinos are champions of this community and so is Mr. Alba.”

On the theme of helping others, Chaparro said being able to help people solve problems in her community is a part of her job that she takes pride in.

“People call me about their electric bill



or their phone bill or their water bill. It is such a huge range of calls, I don't know all the answers all the time, but I know who to call to get the answers for people," she said.

If you are looking to change the community around you, Chaparro offers this message going into 2024.

"Get involved, not only with your government, but get involved in nonprofit organizations. We all get to select the organizations that we would like to volunteer for whether it is domestic violence, our pets, hunger or senior citizens. We need to get involved and bridge the separation that we are all feeling from one another and to know that if we are able to do that and help each other, that's the spirit of this community that has shown me in the past that we are all going to be ok. It's going to take hard work from all of us, not just a few of us, from all of us to be involved and talk to each other and check on each other," Chaparro remarked.

When getting involved, Chaparro stressed to bring our children along. Leading by example to future generations shows them that helping one another and checking in on each other is the heart of our wonderful culture we have in this area.

## CHAMBER SEES CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

Debbi Moore has lived in New Mexico since 1984. In 2016, she was named the new President and CEO of the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce. Moore's previous work includes working with the chambers of commerce in Texas, Hobbs, NM and Albuquerque, NM.

In her seven years of working with the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, Moore has seen the city through several changes.

"As we look forward to 2024, we do so with great expectations that we will see continued growth in our business community. While the pandemic is in our rearview window, businesses continue to face challenges as they navigate to find their 'new normal.' With new leadership poised to lead our city, we, first and foremost, thank our prior council members and mayor for their leadership. We are well aware of some of the issues facing us in the new year including, but not limited to, economic/business development, working to prepare our future workforce and ensure the safety of our businesses and residents," Moore stated.

With 2024 upon us, we are moving



forward as a community and are ready to take on the challenges it may bring our city. By working together, there is nothing Las Cruces can't face.

"Looking forward, we are confident that our new council will continue communication between the council, city staff, residents and business community to address concerns, issues and challenges. No matter the challenges we face, working together, we will continue to move our city forward," Moore concluded.



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### Ingredients

- 1 jar (16 oz.) La Posta Hatch Green Chile Peach Salsa
- 2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. horseradish
- 3 to 4 dashes of La Posta Hatch Red Chile Hot Sauce (optional)

### Directions

In a small bowl combine La Posta Hatch Green Chile Peach Salsa, lemon juice and horseradish. Blend well. Add La Posta Hatch Red Chile Hot Sauce for extra flavor & heat. Place in an airtight container and chill for 30 minutes or up to 2 days.

**Note:** For a classic shrimp cocktail to impress, simply layer a stemmed cocktail glass with specialty micro greens, 2 tbsp. of La Posta's Peach Cocktail Sauce, and hang 4-6 cooked, chilled, and tail on shrimp along the side of the glass. Garnish with a lemon wedge.



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# Save the Date

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 6, 2024

### Día de los Reyes Nativity Event

By Faith Hutson

As a child, when I was growing up, my favorite part of Christmas decorating was to set up our nativity under the tree. After a year in storage, there was such excitement in my self-appointed task of unwrapping and arranging the figures which told the Christmas story. And maybe, on an unconscious level, a seed was planted.

Around the world, Christmas is an annual festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ as a religious and cultural celebration among billions of people. Recreating the scene of Jesus' birth is one of the most enduring Christmas traditions. In the mid-1500s, Nativity sets began to appear not only in churches, but in the homes of wealthier citizens. During the 17th and 18th centuries private displays of nativities became popular culture and wealthy families competed to display the most lavish and largest sets.

Across Latin America, Spain, and among Hispanic communities throughout the U.S., Christmas celebrations culminate on January 6. That date marks Epiphany, the 12th day of Christmas, and heralds the end of the holiday season. Special prominence is given to the three kings who are the first recorded gift bringers and the origin of many customs including carols, plays, and enjoyment of the traditional pastry called Rosca de Reyes.

I never intended to have a nativity (nacimiento) collection. It really started when my parents gave me a beautiful 16-piece carved olive wood nativity that they purchased in Israel in 1984. Several years later, I saw an exhibit on nativities at Kent Hall University Museum and I was blown away by how the story of the birth of Christ is told through the creative lens of artists from around the

world. That exhibit really inspired me to start acquiring my own. Since then, the collection has grown slowly with an emphasis on unique nativities especially from foreign countries.

The collection reflects my preference for folk art nativities where the materials, animals, settings or costumes reflect the culture of the artist. Currently, there are approximately 220 sets in the collection and another 32 that are tree ornaments. More than 66 countries are represented and the nativities range in size from 0.8 cm tall (in a coffee bean) to nearly 23 inches tall and are made of all manner of materials. Our collection is out year-round, and any free space is a showcase for them. Some are even displayed in the bathroom and on the refrigerator.

For me collecting is more than just owning nativities; it is an adventure which encompasses the search for them, the background research about the artist, the region, and the materials used for each piece. To see when peoples of other countries and tribes take up the story of Christmas and express it through the materials, styles, and colors of their daily lives and culture, that is now the excitement!

My husband John is very supportive, although he will admit that I am the one obsessed. It was his idea, encouraged by friends, to have an open house event to share our nativity collection with a wider audience. We hold our Día de los Reyes event to coincide with Epiphany, which celebrates the manifestation of

Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi or Kings; in other words, "here comes everybody."

The Hutson/Verploegh historic home is on the original El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, which was used from 1598 to 1882. In Las Cruces, a portion of this trading route is on Mesquite Street, the eastern side of the Original Townsite of Las Cruces since 1849. In recognition of this important trail, we designed and constructed a fence of historic wheels or replicas of the wheels that traveled the trade route from wooden carretas to modern-day wheels.

We hope you might join us at the close of this Christmas Season. This year the open house event will be held on Saturday, January 6, 2024, at 706 B South Mesquite Street, from 12 noon to 4:00 p.m. This is a self-guided tour with a brochure and docents to provide additional information. A suggested \$5.00 donation per person will help increase the fund we are building to hire artists for public art in the Mesquite Original Townsite Historic District. Please do plan to attend this January 6 for El Día de los Reyes!





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## El Indio Tortilla Shop *Recipe*

By Lana Swapp and Robert Hopkins

Every town has its hidden gems and secrets, and Las Cruces is no exception. As a matter of fact, among the very finest of them from all around is El Indio Tortilla Shop.

This family-owned business has made sharing great food what they are all about. As with several local family restaurants, El Indio Tortilla Shop is a family legacy, handed down from generation to generation for more than 40 years locally, and just more than 100 years in total. It continuously makes some of the very best

of Mexican foods in the area. From their renowned flour tortillas, tortilla chips, salsa, and queso to various other Mexican specialties, this place is truly a treat. I was completely blown away by just how good their rolled tacos are, and with the holidays upon us, can you say tamales? The masa is made fresh daily, and they are just so delicious and moist. They are some of the very best tamales I've ever had.

El Indio Tortilla Shop's very own, Karla Barela, would like to share one of her own favorite yet simple salsa recipes,

and wishes everyone the very happiest of holidays. Jalapeño Salsa, from her table to yours.

### JALAPEÑO SALSA

#### Ingredients:

- Six jalapeños (stems removed)
- ¼ onion (peeled)
- 1 cup of tomato puree
- Handful of fresh cilantro
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1½ teaspoons of Salt (or more to taste)

#### Instructions:

- Boil the jalapeños and onion until soft (about 10 minutes).
- Place all ingredients into a blender or food processor.
- Pulse 4 to 5 times until desired consistency.
- Enjoy with El Indio tortilla chips!

Make sure to visit Las Cruces' own El Indio Tortilla Shop and don't forget to order your holiday tamales soon. The restaurant is located at 150 East Madrid Avenue, Las Cruces.

## Holiday Hosting

# TIPS FROM A SOCIALITE

by G. Buck

Prep for the Party: Creative dining room space is imperative if you're limited by table size and or room dimensions.

This Thanksgiving was the first formal meal I have had the pleasure of serving with a full service for six in my beloved La Rosa Villa, a 100-year-old adobe on San Pedro Street. I've had quite a few formal service house engagements and partial service for semi-formal dinners, but this was Thanksgiving.

When I purchased the property, I had a general idea for space and décor, but I knew the marble-top dinner table I had purchased was not quite big enough, given its circular shape and it only sits five comfortably. About two years ago I put on my Christmas list money for a



Louis XVI desk for my office, but once I entered a Calvert, Texas showroom, I knew I would need something with a bit more flex given our last party's back and forth service to the kitchen.

I pushed onto Navasota, Texas, saved myself a chunk of change and enough to acquire a marble top buffet that was a

perfect pair for the dinner table. I walked out with a late 1800s gateleg dinner table as my desk, and, at some point, it had become my dinner table extension.

This holiday was the day I spent post turkey coating and stuffing, clearing my desk to bring into the front room.

Continued on Page 22 ►



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# Holiday Cocktail

By: Melissa Serrano, Mixologist

## CHRISTMAS MIMOSA

1/2 oz. cranberry vodka  
2 muddled mint leaves  
1/4 oz. simple syrup  
1/2 oz. cranberry juice  
Prosecco champagne  
Ice

Combine the muddled mint and simple syrup in a glass or shaker. Shake well with ice, strain into champagne glass. Add the Prosecco and top with cranberry juice. Add a mint leaf for garnish.

### ◀ Continued from Page 20

The table worked great as the extension after pushing the marble top against the window and the gateleg against the other table. I threw on an antique lace tablecloth as a protective layer and began laying out the china and silver service. This was also a time when I was preparing to have two of everything on the table hemispheres for ease of access.

With this said, my tip for the holiday season is flexibility of furniture, and you can draw inspiration from times gone by.



Gateleg and drop-leaf tables were born out of the necessity for space saving while also having the ability to entertain. You can still be all together sitting amongst your company even at large gatherings with limited seating by being creative – bring a table forward to your couch, layout the space to create three to four sitting spaces, and double the dining area by placing conventional chairs opposite.

Remember, those heirlooms are calling for you to bring them out, dust them off, and woo your guests by creating ambiance and experience with an element of self-showcasing your personal style.

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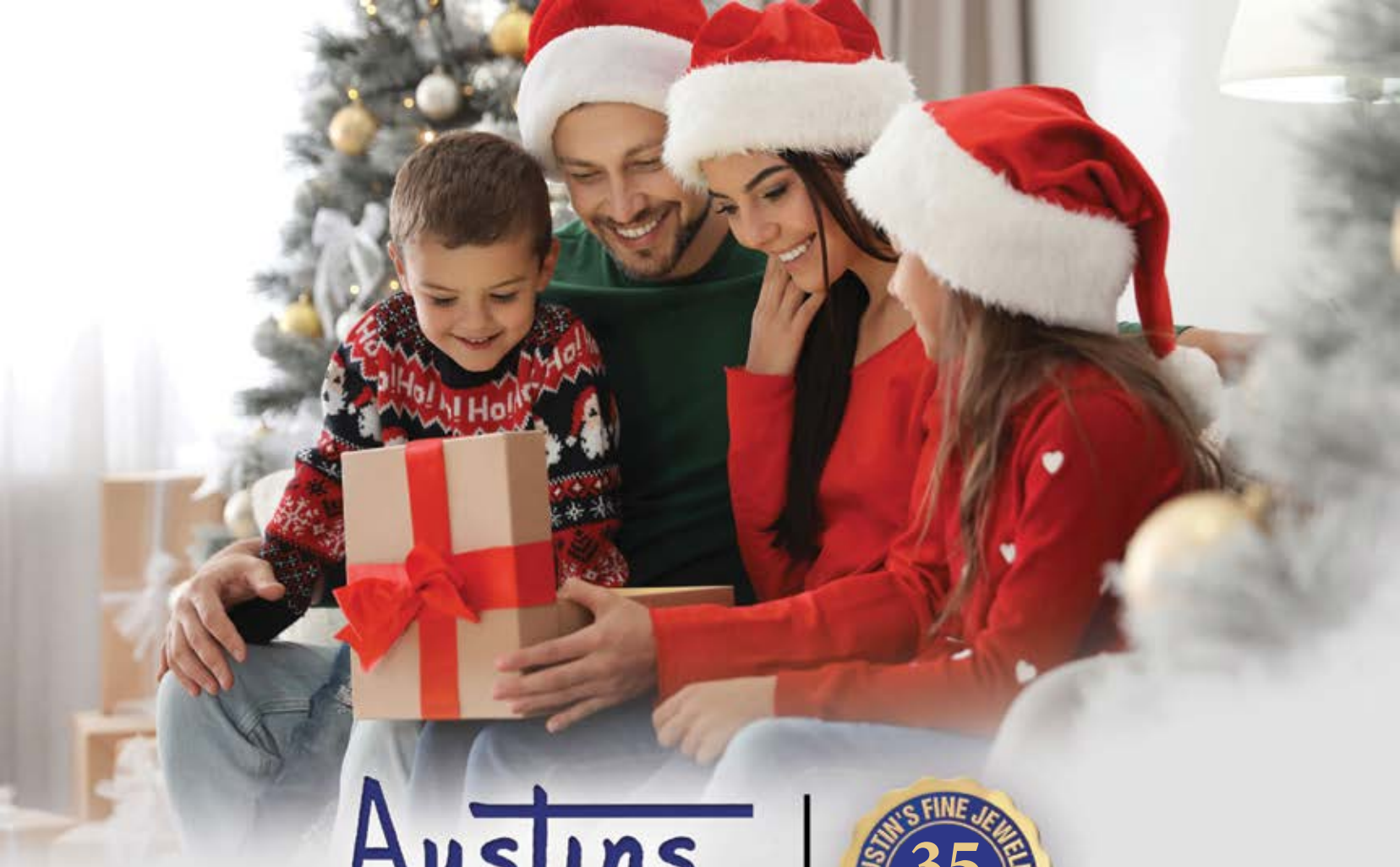
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