



# DAVID RAPELJE

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT PROFESSIONAL

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I have been involved in the live entertainment industry for over 25 years in many capacities and roles. In the positions of Executive Director, Operations Manager, Production Manager, Venue Manager, Technician, Promoter, and Producer, I developed a vast skill-set based on the facilitation of thousands of live performances. Since 2004 I have been at the forefront of entertainment in the Canadian gaming industry. I was responsible for overseeing the opening of four of the largest live music and special event venues in Canadian casinos, including the 1500 seat Avalon Theatre and the 28,000 square foot Grand Hall at the Fallsview Casino in Niagara Falls, Ontario. In 2010, I opened the 2300 seat Molson Canadian Centre at Casino New Brunswick in Moncton, and the 2600 seat Event Centre at Grey Eagle Casino in Calgary completed in 2013. All three of these projects were builds from the ground floor up overseeing all the commissioning phases as well as the installation of all required production and systems into the venues.

Most recently, I opened the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines, Ontario. The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is a 95,000 square foot cultural complex comprised of four state-of-the-art performance venues: Partridge Concert Hall, The Recital Hall, Robertson Theatre and The Film House.

I have a balance of experience in both profit and not for profit venues, and understand the unique aspects of both based on the experiences I have had opening facilities. I strive to be a resourceful, creative, ambitious senior professional. I am well versed in entertainment programming and delivering memorable high profile productions. Being a charismatic and collaborative leader who sets and maintains high standards has contributed to the success of the venues I have opened. Throughout my career, I have worked on a multitude of entertainment projects and developed a reputation for delivering professional service with a no nonsense approach. I was formally recognized for my work on various Canadian college campuses for delivering unique and creative live entertainment programming when I was presented with the National Entertainment Programmer of the Year Award by the Canadian Association of Campus Activities in 2002. As well in 2005, I was award the Supplier of the Year Award by Festival and Events Ontario. I have held the roll of Producer and Technical Director on many festival and events including; the David Foster Charity Gala, the Live to Tell Concert with Sheryl Crow and the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame Gala to name a few. I have worked hard to become a trusted and respected industry professional.

The entertainment industry can be very complex and with many organizations falling short to deliver long term success. I believe it is like any other industry, one must include good organization, planning and communication for a venue to create an exceptional audience, artist experience and the right team. I have a proven record of building great teams.

- Opening experience & building design
- Architectural experience and collaboration
- Development of policy and procedure
- Budget management and FF&E
- Venue systems
- Talent procurement and programming
- Event management and delivery
- Development of signature events
- Customer service programs
- Rental programs and 3rd Party partnerships
- Strategic planning
- Problem solver
- Strong communication skills
- In-depth industry experience
- Experience with Boards and community groups

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## EXPERIENCE

- 28 years experience in the Canadian entertainment industry
- Completion and operation of 5 venues in Canada, the largest being 95,000 square feet
- Experience as a leader from the ground floor up on all five projects
- Ability to navigate the often complex aspects of new build construction
- Strong skill-set in working with architects and builders on new builds
- Deep knowledge of the critical path to opening and making operational venues
- Have learned a long list of "best practices" in the design and opening of venues
- Complete and comprehensive understanding of all areas of an entertainment venue and how facilitate those areas working as one
- I am skilled in event design and execution having created many signature events for various organizations
- I understand the need for excellent customer service and for setting the bar high in striving to operate world class facilities
- I have worked with young, developing artists to international superstars and have learned how to create good experiences for all artists which create great performances
- I have a no nonsense approach to entertainment and collaboratively have the ability to get the job done and problem solve.
- I have seen when new build construction goes wrong and I know how to manage it
- I have developed many systems for the effective facilitation of live entertainment at a very high volume
- I am excellent at identifying opportunity within a venue and have the ability to capitalize on it
- Based on the buildings I have opened, I have a long list of what works and what does not work which provides the insight to avoid costly mistakes
- I have been sought out as a consultant to do operational reviews on failing entertainment programs
- I have worked in venues with very high standards of presenting and customer service

## PERSPECTIVE

- I understand the many sensitivities that will arise when opening a new municipal facilities and how to manage them based on experience
- Having worked for profit and not for profit organizations, I understand the balance required for effective programming and fiscal responsibility
- I believe Arts and Culture are a vital part of any well rounded community, and I believe that can be accomplished by offsetting the costs with robust venue rental programs creating balance in the venue
- I believe relationships matter and with the professional partnerships I have developed it can open the door to lucrative co-presents opportunities
- I am not your average Arts presenter as I have a high level of experience managing very large for profit budgets
- I do not believe that culture should come at a cost but that long-term successful arts venues should be self-sustaining contrary to industry norm



# AVALON BALLROOM – FALLSVIEW CASINO



**VENUE OVER VIEW:** The Fallsview Casino is the largest gaming entertainment complex built in Canada at a cost of one billion dollars. The entertainment and retail section of the complex has 100,000ft<sup>2</sup> of floor space. The Avalon Theatre at Fallsview Casino is its state-of-the-art performing arts centre. Built to accommodate just 1,547 guests, the design of the Avalon Theatre creates an extremely intimate entertainment experience, with the furthest seats less than 30 metres/100 feet from the stage. The Avalon Theatre was designed to be infinitely flexible. All 1,000 seats on the floor and mezzanine areas can be removed or re-arranged, thus allowing for various and flexible seating plans and configurations, including banquet style, classroom style, dance floor and raised runway. The stage can even be converted into additional seating, creating a four-sided seating plan for events such as boxing and concerts in the round. This flexibility makes the Avalon suitable for a variety of events, including concerts, Broadway-style musicals, dance troupes and headlining entertainment. Opened on June 8, 2004, with the rest of Fallsview Casino Resort, the Avalon was christened with a pair of shows by Canadian crooner Paul Anka. Since then, many headline entertainers have played the room, including: Jay Leno, John Stewart, Donna Summer, Don Henley, David Spade, Keith Urban, Glenn Frey, Sugarland, INXS, George Thorogood, Lionel Richie, Michael Bubl , Elvis Costello, Andrea Bocelli, Don Rickles, STYX, Olivia Newton-John, The Doobie Brothers, Ringo Starr, Martin Short, B.B.King, Huey Lewis, Aretha Franklin, Tony Bennet, Leann Rimes, Reba Mcintyre, Regis Philbin, Tony Bennett.



*Avalon Ballroom*



*Opening Night June 8, 2014 Paul Anka*



*Grande Hall*

**2006: Awarded prestigious Canadian Country Music Association  
Venue of the Year Fallsview Casino's Avalon Ballroom**

## KEY DELIVERABLES

- Appointed to the prominent position of Production Manager to take full control over the commissioning of the new 1,500 seat unoccupied theatre from the general contractors.
- Directed a team of cross-functional professionals tasked with rectifying a myriad of design flaws within a limited time frame prior to the casino/theatre opening.
- Led the operations team of 10 full-time Technicians, 50 third party contract professionals and 3 full-time Associates in organizing and delivering to large audiences an impressive array of legendary entertainers. Performances held in an intimate environment considered to be one of the best equipped facilities of its kind in North America.
- Researched and secured state-of-the-art staging, sound, lighting, and operations equipment from suppliers across the world including \$300,000 PA upgrade and \$400,000 in back line gear to support artists as well as to eliminate considerable logistics expenditures. Wrote RFQs and RFPs totalling \$4 million as the facility's equipment required replacement or improvements.
- Accountable for showcasing the largest line up of 'A Class' talent in Ontario, sourcing, negotiating, and advancing talent.
- Oversaw the operations and talent advancing for two additional stages, the 365 Club and the Splash Bar, functioning 7 days a week with a total of 270 performances in all 3 locations.
- Acted as the Production Manager and Creative Design Consultant during the high profile, David Foster and Friends Charity Gala Concert, including a full scale show with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra featuring David Foster, Andrea Bocelli, Michael Bublé, Paul Anka, and Baby Face, which raised \$3.3 million for the Foster Foundation.
- Managed the 28,000 sq. ft. Grand Hall Conference and Convention Centre between 2004 and 2006 hosting numerous corporate and special events.
- Instrumental in leading the theatre to receive the prestigious Canadian Country Music Association Venue of the Year Award in 2006.
- Renowned for the ability to conceive, adapt, and deliver large scale arena shows into the 1,500 seat theatre while working with a wide variety of professionals to complete the projects.
- Reported to the Director of Entertainment or the President during significant transition at the senior level management. Appointed to take complete charge of the casino's entertainment services for 6 months during a senior level realignment.
- Established good rapport with all entertainers, acting as the casino's ambassador and main point of contact during their stay.
- Worked with the artists and their agents from the contract agreement through to the performance to solidify arrangements.
- Managed the private rental and corporate speaking engagements held in the Avalon Theatre including organizing the 'Misty Awards.'

***2006: Acted as the Production Manager ect with the broken line box above Regis can be removed as it is in the text. Can you add the pic of Micheal Buble and the one of B.B, King I added under each small can you add The Legendary B.B, King and Michael Bublé - David Foster and Friends Charity Gala***



***“In particular, Dave Rapelje did his usual great job of welcoming us and making sure the show ran smoothly. I can't tell you how impressed I am with him. I wish all our venues had someone like that.”***

***Regis Philbin  
TV Personality***



# THE MOLSON CENTRE – CASINO NEW BRUNSWICK



**VENUE OVERVIEW:** The Centre at Casino New Brunswick is a state-of-the-art, multi-purpose concert and special event venue. Casino New Brunswick presents a yearly concert schedule and the Centre is available for 3rd party rentals. The Centre can be used for live concerts/performances, conventions, conferences or large scale sporting events with its multiuse design. The Centre includes resources and production capabilities to make any event, a "WOW", via the 2.2 million dollar in-house inventories of sound, lighting and staging installations. This system is capable of accommodating world class touring artists and custom designed performances and events. The Centre at Casino New Brunswick was designed to have the infinite ability to be reconfigured and is assisted which by digital connectivity that has been built into the entire venue can accommodate all the needs of any concert promoter or special event planner. This is a "one-stop shop" with the Centre being able to accommodate all of its daily show needs, artist accommodations, full food and beverage catering, and artist rider requirements. The Centre provides a complete production team well-versed in live concert presentations, as well as any local crew requirements and backline. It delivers flawless execution of events with an extensive in-house ticketing system for online sales, which includes a 24 hour a day bilingual call center and custom-designed event ticketing. The Centre is fully equipped with event management software to make the process of room design and layout exceptionally easy and accurate which is used in the majority of live event venues in North America.



*Champagne - The Club Installation and Casino New Brunswick New Years Eve*



*Heart and Stroke Red Dress Fashion Show - Television Personality Jeanne Beker*

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Appointed to the position of Manager of Entertainment at the construction phase
- Was the property liaison with the Construction Team, and provided cost savings and effective operation of the venue via an extensive review of the architectural drawings
- Was tasked with the procurement of all required FF&E for the Centre including the multimillion dollar installation of the Centre's comprehensive sound, lighting, video and staging inventory
- Responsible for all aspects of the entertainment program including talent procurement, marketing, box office and venue operations
- Tasked with building a team of industry professionals inclusive of out of Province Recruitment as well as the venues staffing model
- Managed the yearly operational and talent procurement budget with the CFO, and worked closely with the GM to develop the properties Talent Procurement Performa to assess ROI and exposure factors in the purchase of talent to successful results
- As the property stood to affect other smaller presenting venues in the market, I worked to build relationships with these venues in the area in order to lessen the impact our new venue would have on the market. This resulted in the an Usher Share Program that generated income for these venues by servicing our venues need for ushers, and an equipment exchange program to save these venues from many costly rentals
- I was required to research and select a venue ticketing system which resulted in a profit sharing model for all service fees and additional income for the venue
- Key to the success of property was my development of a lucrative rentals program that saw effective use of open dates and it positioned the venue as the best option for events in New Brunswick

## OF NOTE:

- Created many signature events for the property including Champagne the Club Installation at Casino New Brunswick. This was the largest New Year's event in the Province and sold out in hours.
- Unique to this property was the need to establish the venue with international touring artists and agencies who had previously not seen New Brunswick as a viable entertainment market in Canada's East Coast. Through buying partnerships and networking with other promoters, my team were able to bring in "A level" talent to the Centre that had previously not played Eastern Canada.

***"I was impressed and grateful to have Dave Rapelje direct and produce my Heart Truth Fashion Gala into the amazing event it is today. This event had come to a standstill after 2 years running. However in 2011, Dave helped me create something magical and exciting that will undoubtedly live on for years to come. The most incredible aspect and the one the one that I was most impressed with, was the fact that Dave worked with his industry connections to add big production elements to my event at no cost. To sum up my experience with the facility, it was Dave who brought everything together, set me at ease and helped me around every corner."***

**Darcy LeBlanc**  
**Director of Communications**  
**Heart and Stroke Foundation of New Brunswick**



Canadian Olympic Induction Gala



# GREY EAGLE - CALGARY



**VENUE OVERVIEW:** The Grey Eagle Event Centre, just 10 minutes from Calgary's downtown core, opened its doors in March 2014 to great fanfare and tremendous reviews. The Centre is a state-of-the-art, multi-purpose concert, conference, and special event venue. At the heart of the in-house inventory is the \$5 million dollar lighting, audio, video, and staging operation, capable of executing any vision from concept to completion or World-class touring artists. The venue was designed to be 100% reconfigurable for seating with occupancy of 2317 seated or 2900 general admission. The venue's infrastructure and adjoining hotels allows for the easy facilitation of daily show needs such as artist accommodations, full catering from food and beverage as well as the facilitation of all artist rider requirements. It is also well suited for the planning of annual general meetings, conferences, trade shows, exhibitions and seminars.



*Opening Night - Country Star Dwight Yoakam*



*Wu-Tang Clan Live at the Events Centre*



*Grey Eagle Casino Event Centre*



## KEY DELIVERABLES

- Engaged to assist the architectural team in the building and pre-construction design phases to review functionality of the space
- Responsible for the overall staffing model and recruitment of team, as well as succession planning
- Created an effective cost-saving staffing model that saw only 3 full-time staff operating the entire facility
- Negotiated a deal with a 3rd party supplier for all remaining show staffing. This ability to “mirror” the scheduled show provided large savings for the overall operational budget
- Required to liaison and consult with Casino Marketing Team as they had never marketed large scale live entertainment
- Responsible for all entertainment programing inclusive of procurement, negotiation and contracting. Used strong industry contacts to provide a long list of “A level” entertainers to the market
- Developed a comprehensive rental program to make use of facility down time
- Recruited, trained and transferred the building to the new Executive Director
- Developed all the Policies and Procedures for the new venue
- Selected and implemented the venue ticketing system
- Set-up and facilitated the venues booking systems and contracting
- Was required to liaison with Casino Management and Council Members of the Tsuut’ina Nation who both had operational control of the property. This required a strong level of communication skills as there was often the need to find the middle ground
- Worked with the Hotel to package the property as a whole to attract lucrative conferencing business in Calgary

## OF NOTE:

- Contracted by the ownership group to come in and assist the struggling Executive Director hired for the facility. This included creating a critical path to opening, as well as taking control of the venue from the contractors and making the facility operational. I was ultimately required to source a New Executive Director and assist him through the opening phase of the operation.

***“Dave was instrumental in getting the Event Centre at Grey Eagle Casino open and operational. We relied on Dave’s other opening experiences to help us navigate the build and upstart of an amazing new venue in the very competitive Calgary market. As well, Dave assisted us transitionally with a succession plan and the recruitment of the Executive Director that Dave turned the building over to operate. Dave assisted us deeply in the design and architectural review of our new facility which resulted in a world class facility well suited to the fast paced environment of live entertainment.”***

**Anthony Novac**  
**President, Sonco Gaming**  
**Vice President, Sonco Hospitality**



*Council Members of The Tsuut’ina Nation - Grand Opening Grey Eagle Event Centre*

# FIRSTONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO



*First Ontario Performing Arts Centre Opened November 15, 2015*

**VENUE OVERVIEW:** The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is a new 95,000 square foot cultural complex comprised of four state-of-the-art performance venues built in downtown St. Catharines. Opened in 2015 It has been an exciting development that has resulted in a dynamic invigoration of the local and cultural economy. It is used every day by over 500 students from Brock University by converting the Recital Hall and Film House into Lecture Halls.

Partridge Hall is a beautiful, multi-purpose concert hall seating 700 that can accommodate theatrical and musical performances, as well as community or corporate events. Audience members enjoy excellent sightlines and proximity to the stage, world-class acoustics boasting the most equipped professional grade sound, lighting and video installations in Niagara.

The Recital Hall has less than half the number of seats, but is still fully equipped to handle any event and designed with every detail in mind – adaptable acoustics, state-of-the-art sound, excellent sightlines and seating plan that promises each person a close and personal experience.

Robertson Hall is a flexible "black box" space with 2,600 square feet of floor space. This multi-purpose and intimate space is fully equipped with production elements and can be set with a 105 retractable theatre seating unit, tables, chairs, stools or nothing at all. Niagara's Film House offers the very best of cinema from around the World along with the classic, the cult and the genre films. A small stage in front of the screen also allows for seminars, speaker series, stand-up comedy and post-screening Q&As. The Film House also offers great concessions plus a licensed bar.



*Robertson Theatre*



*The Recital Hall*



*Film House*



*Partridge Hall*



## KEY DELIVERABLES

- Architectural review and design consultation with Diamond + Schmitt architectural team
- Property representative through the construction phase with builder
- Required to resolve design flaw issues with architects and builder
- Audio, sound, lighting and video review for all four venues with AV consultant which resulted in several major change orders and upgrades
- Required to assess, tender and purchase all required FF&E for the entire property
- Required to do all hires for the venue Operations Team as well as building the Organization Chart
- Designed and developed the building concessions service
- Managed the building liquor licence and responsible service program
- Responsible for building the Customer Service Model and training
- Developed the venue Usher program and the service awards program for Ushers
- Oversaw building maintenance and custodial staff
- Oversaw all aspects of venue production and 4 full-time Technical Supervisors
- Negotiated the collective agreement with International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 461, considered one of the best agreements in the country
- Required to design and implement the building rental program, booking process and contracting
- Worked with team on implementation of the property booking software and event management software
- Design build of the venues signature events as well as execution
- Wrote all venue Policies and Procedures
- Provided daily direction to the Operations Team

## OF NOTE

- Navigated many building delays during the construction phase and devised a plan to open the venue in stages without the cancellation of any performances

***“A thousand thanks for all your super-human efforts to have Partridge Hall ready for last night's Chorus Niagara performance. I know you pulled out ALL the stops as well as many late-nighters! In addition I want to thank you for your very gracious handling of all the performers under what was, I am sure, a stressful period for you all. Your calm, welcoming, courteous, and respectful approach with all of us was so appreciated! This was professionalism at its best!”***

***Dr. Robert Cooper, CM  
Artistic Director  
Chorus Niagara  
Orpheus Choir of Toronto  
Opera in Concert Chorus  
Ontario Male Chorus***



*Chorus Niagara under the direction Dr, Robert Cooper*

# LUCKNOW'S MUSIC IN THE FEILDS



*Lee Brice live at Music in the Fields 2017*



*2019 marked donations totalling 1.3 million dollars*



*Dean Brody*

**EVENT OVERVIEW:** Lucknow's Music in the Fields is an exciting Country music festival tailored to friends and family in authentic, small-town, rural Ontario. 2020 marks the 12th year of the festival. It is a unique event in that 100% of all the proceeds are donated to the fight against Cystic Fibrosis and to fund organizations and charities in the community. It is situated at Graceland Festival Grounds, with camping space provided by local landowners, Music in the Fields offers a combined festival and camping experience. The event has grown from 1200 patrons in 2009 to over 8000 in recent years. One of the core values of the festival has been the community nature of the event. It developed from a Kinsmen event into one that is built upon the cooperative and supportive nature of the many other service groups and the entire community. The event offers camping, shuttles around town, food & drink, merchandise and, of course, the best Country music festival the audience has ever experienced!



*Production and Stage Crew 2019*



*MC Johnny Gardhouse honouring our Canadian Military*



*Music In The Fields Stage*



## KEY DELIVERABLES

- Volunteer Recognition Programs
- Initial event design and critical path to year 1-5
- All talent procurement of "A level" country touring artists
- Structure and produce all offers for talent
- Advance all logistics and technical coordination with contracted Artists Tour Management
- Responsible for all production management for the festival
- Management of all 3rd party contractors and suppliers on-site
- Direct and manage all production staff and technical crews
- Responsible for running Day of Show operations and management
- Consult with marketing on all artist related aspects
- Site planning
- VIP programs

### OF NOTE:

The Lucknow Kinsmen are a completely non-profit community organization and all monies raised by these initiatives directly support charities, hospitals, schools, local and regional projects that help keep small-town Ontario "small-town" but with a big town feel. With the leadership of TNR Productions, the festival has been able to donate in excess of 1.3 million dollars to organizations in need.



Brett Kissel

***"We quickly realized that we needed a level of expertise and industry experience to move our event to the next level. Our search for that expertise leads us to Dave Rapelje who was contracted as our Producer. After several meetings with Dave, we realized that he was able to quickly define a critical path for our success. Dave steered us into a five year plan with continuous steps for growth to establish our Festival. There was a learning curve and Dave walked us through each of these transitional steps to year five. I am happy to say with Dave's involvement and the commitment of our 400+ volunteers we are planning and executing year 12 of our Festival."***

***Rick McMurray***

***Chairman – Lucknow's Music in the Fields Festival***



Producers Jayson Duggan and Dave Rapelje with Country Star Blake Shelton



# CANAL DAYS MARINE HERITAGE FESTIVAL



**EVENT OVERVIEW:** 2020 celebrates the 42st Annual Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival, and TNR Productions' 22nd year producing the Canal Days Concert Series. The Festival offers activities and attractions each Civic Holiday weekend, for a four-day celebration of history and heritage along the canal in Port Colborne, Ontario. The Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival encompasses the entire community, with activities at a dozen different venues. The Canal Days Concert Series at H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park features national level entertainment nightly.

Each year more than 400,000 people visit the Festival over four days with 30,000 fans attending the concert series. A source of great community pride, Canal Days is Port Colborne's signature event, and it is the hundreds of local volunteers who work tirelessly that make this unique event Niagara's premier summer festival. Some of the artists who have performed were: Blue Rodeo, I Mother Earth, Finger Eleven, David Wilcox, Honeymoon Suite, The Trews, April Wine.



*Fireboat Edward M Cotter*



*Blue Rodeo at Canal Days 2018*



*Dave with rising Canadian Country music star Madeline Merlo*



## KEY DELIVERABLES

- Management of the Festival's entertainment budget for the concert series and West Street Series
- Built, structured, and managed all offers for talent and contracts
- Advanced all logistics and technical coordination with contracted artists' Tour Managers
- All production management for the Festival
- Management of all 3rd party contractors and suppliers on site
- Directed and managed all production staff and technical crews
- Ran Day of Show operations and management
- Consulted with marketing team on all artist-related aspects
- Site planning
- VIP programs
- Consulting as required

## OF NOTE:

- 22 year working history with the Festival as its entertainment producer and production supplier



Tall Ship Empire Sandy

***"David has worked with the City of Port Colborne over these twenty-two years to continually grow the Festival into one of the City's signature events. David works well with the City's Festival organizing committee and is always focused on the overall success of the Festival. He excels at assisting and educating the community members on the committee in allowing them to understand the sometimes complex areas of presenting live entertainment. As the event leader for the City, I can say that David's skill set is a very valuable resource to have on my team."***

**Ashley Grigg**  
**Director of Community and Economic Development**  
**City of Port Colborne**



Blue Rodeo



# WHEN NOT WORKING



Zambia Africa



Med8itation



Kathmandu Nepal



Yangtze River Print by David Rapelje



Franschhoek South Africa



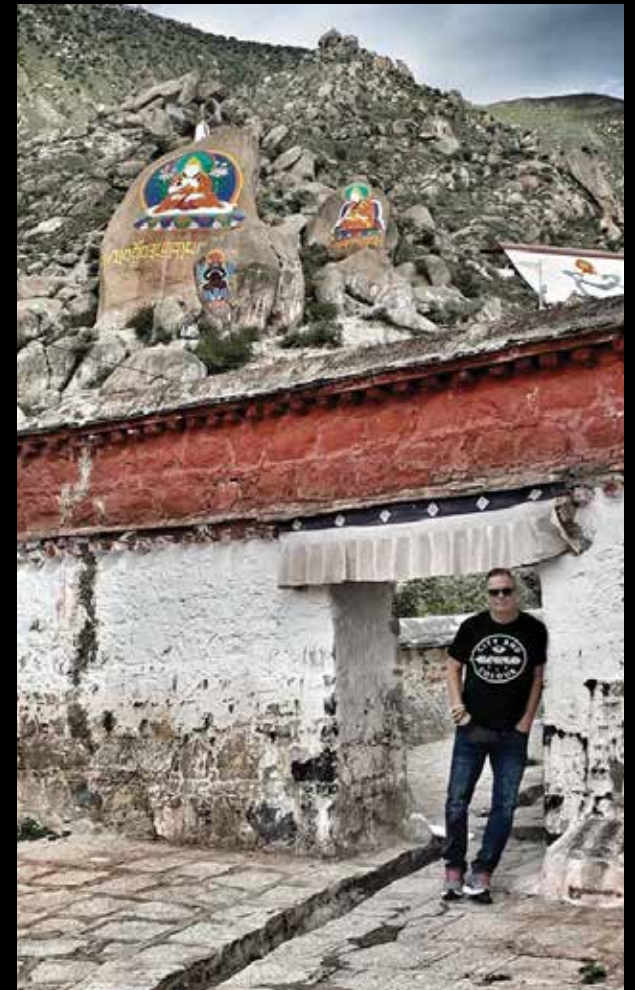
Mt Everest Base Camp Print by David Rapelje



Great Cycle Challenge for Sick Kids

## OTHER THAN WORK

- I have travelled extensively to many countries throughout the world
- I am a motor cycle enthusiast and have travelled by motorcycle through many parts of journeys
- I enjoy cycling and I am a commuter cyclist. I completed the 400km Great Cycle Challenge for Sick Kids and raised in excess of 8000 dollars in donations
- I enjoy photography and producing prints from my travels
- I practice meditation daily and have travelled to Asia to participate in meditation programs



Chengguan Tibet