



A Life in Lyrics: The Chris Costa Story

By Angela Parker | Photos by Aubrie Dismang

Spotlight on Chris Costa: The Man Behind the Music

It's easy to spot Chris Costa on stage: the charisma, the voice, the vibe—equal parts talent, heart, and hard work. He is known for his dynamic performances and polished show, where he covers 50 years of music with incredible authenticity. But beyond the spotlight is a life steeped in music, family, and a whole lot of heavy equipment. We caught up with Chris to learn more about the man who has become one of the most respected entertainers in Northern Nevada.

Family, Harmony, and Early Beginnings

Chris Costa's story starts in Stockton, California, where he was raised by Joe and Sharon Costa—two supportive parents who may not have realized at the time that they were nurturing a musical dynasty.

"I have three siblings—Andrea, Joanna, and Rick—and we were all musical," Chris says. "My brother played drums, my sisters sang and played piano, and my mom... well, she had this beautiful voice. She even sang in jazz clubs in New Orleans on a trip—just walked in and did it. She was fearless."

Growing up, music was ever-present. "There was always music and singing in the house. I started playing piano around eight years old, learning songs off the radio. That was it for me—I was hooked. While other kids were out riding bikes, I was figuring out how to play Beatles tunes."

From Stockton to Sparks

Chris made his way to Sparks, Nevada, in 2006 after a brief stint in Fairfield, CA.

"I had just started doing the one-man-show format, and I was playing a small venue just outside of Fairfield. A couple of patrons walked up and asked if I was from Reno, and said my act was like something you'd see in a casino. That got me thinking! Reno-Sparks had that perfect mix of energy and opportunity."

And as luck (or fate) would have it, it turned out to be the right move.

The Spark Behind the Sparkle

Chris met his wife, Lisa, while performing at the Siena Hotel Casino.

"We were both working at the Siena—we met, became friends, and before long we were inseparable. We've been together for 11 years now, and just celebrated our 5th wedding anniversary. I have an awesome wife. Truly."

Asked what they love most about each other, Chris doesn't hesitate: "Respect, communication, empathy—that's the foundation. We just really like each other, you know? That's underrated."

Local Fun and Favorite Pastimes

When he's not on stage, you'll likely find Chris at home, spending time with Lisa and their dogs.

"We are such dog lovers! Coco is our Chocolate Lab, and Sammie is our Yorkie. Being close to my dogs brings a special kind of tranquility."

When asked about activities outside their home life, the answer comes quick and easy:

"Playing shows is my favorite thing to do in the area—hands down. I get to see friends, connect with people, and do what I love. What more could you ask for?"

A Life in Music—And a Few Pyrotechnics

Chris's professional music journey kicked off early, joining a full-fledged touring band at just 18 years old.

"It was called The Innocents: The History of Rock and Roll. We had costumes, pyrotechnics, elaborate staging... it was like being in KISS meets Broadway," he laughs. "I was the youngest one in the band,

learning everything on the fly while living out of a suitcase. We performed high-energy theatrical shows five or six nights a week. Those years on the road taught me a lot—I had an amazing mentor who taught me everything I needed to know to succeed in the business."

But eventually, the road wore thin.

"I realized I didn't love living out of hotels, so I started choosing places where I could put down roots and build a life while still performing."

One of the most pivotal moments came early in his career, after settling in Albuquerque, NM, where Chris met Ron Anderson, a legendary vocal coach to the stars.

"He was in town visiting a friend—who just so happened to be my agent," Chris says. "Studying with Ron changed the way I understood singing. Being a well-trained singer gives you so many advantages. It's a lifelong journey of learning, and to this day I still seek out new knowledge and techniques. It's essential to my professional life, especially with the high demands I put on my voice."

"After Albuquerque, I came back to California and spent several years in cover bands, and in some really great original rock projects. Then, in the mid-'90s, I steered into modern country, where I was quite successful. I had a great manager and a high-profile house gig at the largest nightclub in California at the time, called The Saddle Rack, in San Jose. We were getting West Coast airplay, and so I moved to Nashville to try and break in.

Since I'm not a country star, I'll bet you can guess what happened!" Chris laughs. "It's a tough market. If you're going to make music there, you better show up with your A-game."

Chris continues, "I decided to head home to California after six years in Nashville. I settled near Fairfield, playing a small venue where I began developing what would become my one-man show."

After moving to Reno in January 2006, Chris quickly landed a house gig at the Polo Lounge. Just months later, a fateful evening would change his life.

"The team from Grand Sierra Resort happened to walk in for drinks. Tom Schrade had just bought the place and was looking for a headliner. After a two-week audition in January 2007, they signed me to a five-year contract."

Chris lit up the GSR stage five nights a week, and his face was featured on the massive marquee every 90 seconds.

"You couldn't miss me. It was a little surreal, but it helped build name recognition."

That high-profile run led to consecutive contracts with the Peppermill, Eldorado, the Siena, Boomtown, and the Tahoe Biltmore.

But then—cue ominous music—COVID hit.

"It shut everything down. No gigs, no crowds, no momentum," Chris recalls. "It was rough, but like many of us, I regrouped. Thankfully, I've made a strong comeback, and I'm grateful to be busy again."

Wearing Sinatra's Hat

You've also performed as Frank Sinatra in Rat Pack shows. What's that experience like?

"It's a blast. Sinatra is such an icon, so stepping into his shoes takes a mix of respect and fun. I lean on the skills I developed in my Man of 1000 Voices show to capture the phrasing and tone, which makes it



Quickfire Q&A with Chris Costa

What's on the horizon for 2025?

"To stay healthy, happy, and busy," Chris says with a grin. "If I can do that, I'll call it a good year."

If you weren't in music, what would you be doing?

"Something creative! I was obsessed with special effects makeup as a kid. I used to do scary monster makeups and make Super 8 horror films. Somewhere in a box, there's a werewolf movie I made starring my dog."

What's the best part of your day?

"Seeing my wife. Easy answer."

Favorite comfort meal in the Costa household?

"That's tough—I love to cook! One of my wife's favorites is pork chops with apple gravy. Pure comfort."

Who's the funniest person in your home?

"Me. But only because Coco and Sammie aren't great at punchlines."

Most inspiring person in your life?

"My mom. She was my best friend and biggest supporter. We were very close. Losing her was rough, but she's always with me."

What do you hope a magazine story says about you 20 years from now?

"That I was a respected entertainer, a faithful husband, and a good friend—someone who touched lives with his music."



feel more authentic. And honestly, anytime I get to sing those timeless songs, it's just pure joy."

The Hardest Part?

The Heavy Lifting.

Being a one-man show comes with its perks—but also its pains.

"The physicality of the job is real," Chris says. "There's a lot of equipment to haul. It's a large show, and I'm very detail-oriented. On show days, I'm on my feet for at least 10 hours. The singing and performing itself require significant energy, strength, and poise. It keeps me in shape, sure—but let's just say it's not exactly a spa day."

Still, the rewards far outweigh the effort.

"All the effort is totally worth it. The friendships I've made here, the people I get to meet, and the successes I've had—I'm grateful. Reno is my home now. It's where I'll stay."

Chris Costa's story is one of passion, resilience, and connection. Whether you've seen him on stage or simply felt the warmth of his voice in a venue lounge, you know that he brings everything he has to every performance—and every friendship.

And if you're lucky enough to catch a set soon, don't be surprised if you leave not just entertained, but a little inspired too.

Catch Chris at his upcoming shows:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/94239043598/>

- Every Wednesday 6-9pm Polo Lounge in Midtown
- Every Thursday at Boomtown 6-10pm
- Every Saturday at Max Casino 7-11pm

