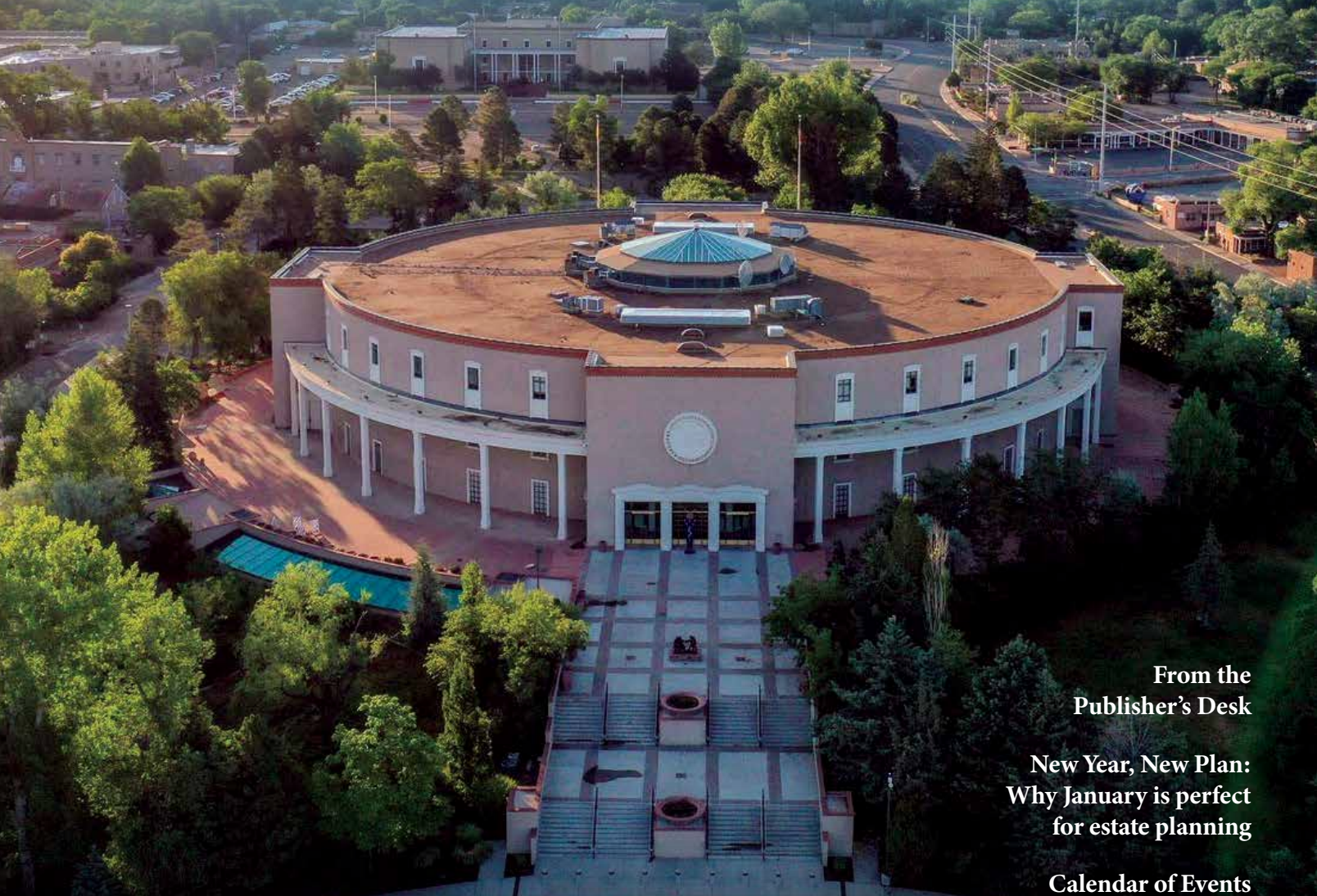


A Legacy Local Monthly Publication

January 2026

# The Historic

Mesilla Valley



From the  
Publisher's Desk

New Year, New Plan:  
Why January is perfect  
for estate planning

Calendar of Events

Community Connection:  
A local staple's fall  
tradition

Tips from a Socialite:  
Receiving guests

Valentine's Day Gems

A Valentine's date night  
special: Green Chile  
Lasagna

Convening of the 2026

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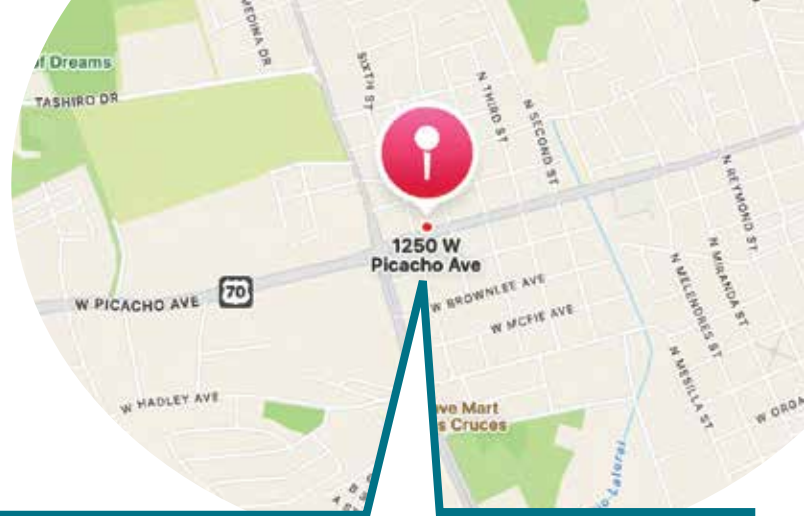
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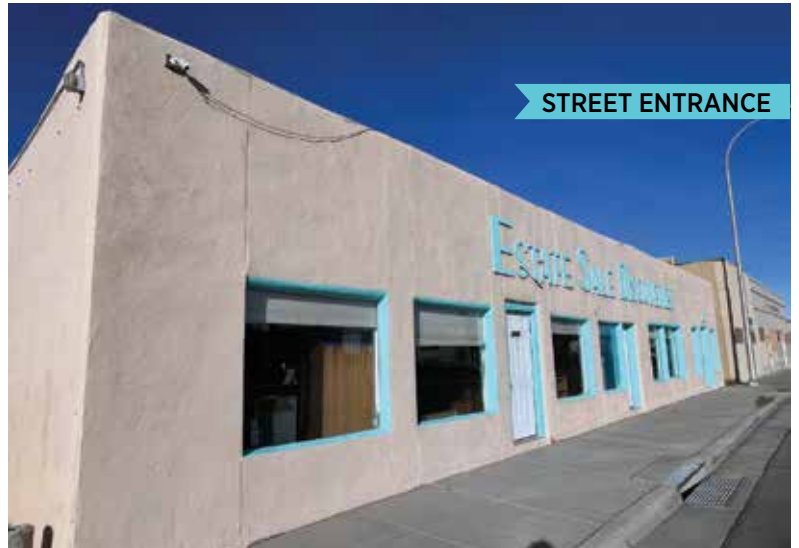
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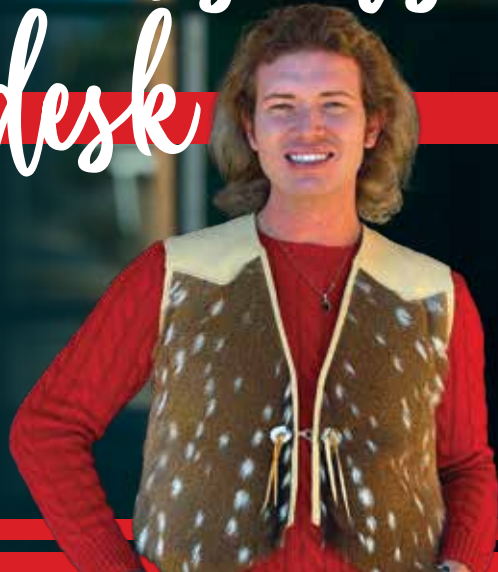
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FROM THE  
*publisher's*  
*desk*



**W**e are saying goodbye to 2025 – the Year of the Snake and the element of Wood. The Wood Snake represents wisdom, transformation, growth, and adaptability – but we leave all that behind for 2026. The Year of the Fire Horse is to bring us freedom, adventure, passion, innovation, speed, and transformation. The Chinese New Year officially commences on Feb. 17. However, since the Western Hemisphere primarily celebrates the new year at the start of January, we will prematurely acknowledge the change.

Now, more news ... maybe worse news? We have another holiday hurtling towards us. Are you also

anticipating Valentine's Day? Not to worry, Hacienda de Mesilla has brought back their special igloos – not only for the winter holiday, but for those love birds seeking a romantic and upscale getaway.

Of course, just because the holidays may have stolen all your money doesn't mean you can skimp on surprises for your beloved. Austin's Fine Jewelry is having their Valentine's Day special, so stop in before the big day. If you don't want to leave the dwelling for dining out, we have a special recipe from the home of a well-known socialite here in the Mesilla Valley, as I have passed the recipe baton to her for this special season. Enjoy!

## New Year, New Plan: Why January is perfect for estate planning

By Jessica Streeter; Owner, Streeter Law Firm, LLC.

January brings fresh energy and new resolutions. While everyone's focused on gym memberships and spring cleaning, there's one resolution that deserves your full attention: your estate plan.

Your estate plan is more than just a will. It's a set of decisions you've made (and the accompanying legal paperwork) that indicate what happens to your assets and who will handle things for you if you're incapacitated or after you pass.

Here's why you should review your plan

every January (or create a plan if you haven't yet):

- Your family might have changed. Births, deaths, marriage, and divorce can all make a difference in your plan. Your plan should match your family and their unique needs today.

- Your financial landscape might be different. Moving, buying or selling real estate, starting or selling a business, or even receiving an inheritance can make a difference in your plan.

- The people you chose might not be right anymore. It's important to ensure that the people who will care for you and your interests are still a good fit. If your executor or agent moved or got too sick to help, you might need to update your plan.

Tax laws evolve, family dynamics shift, and wishes change. This January, give yourself and your family peace of mind by ensuring your estate plan is up to date.



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# Calendar of events

## Jan. 10-16 and Feb. 1-12

- Pop-up library: The Branigan Cultural Center will display a temporary pop-up library featuring books about the history of Las Cruces and New Mexico. Guests can look through local stories at the city's original public library as a part of the past exhibit titled "Ninety Years of Las Cruces Public Libraries". Free. Open during regular hours. 501 N Main St., Las Cruces.

## Jan. 11

- Embroidery workshop: Assembly Craft Studio will be hosting a Floral Embroidery Workshop. This is a step-by-step beginner level workshop designed to teach a variety of 3D embroidery stitches that add texture, dimension, and detail to your designs. Registration is required; please visit [assemblycreate.com](http://assemblycreate.com). \$39 per person. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. 1730 Tierra de Mesilla Suite 6, Las Cruces.

## Jan. 12

- Women's group: Casa De Mi Alma hosts a women's group every other Monday called Cafe Con Chisme. This group is for women to come together as a community to share

their stories, discuss various topics, and more. No registration is required and drop-ins are welcome. Free. 5:30-6:30 p.m. 920 N Alameda Blvd. Suite 1, Las Cruces.

## Jan. 14

- Presentation: Ric Rao will give a presentation on using native dyes in the process of producing colored yarns and textiles. These dyes use vegetable, insect, animal, and mineral substances and are produced as they were by native peoples centuries ago. Free. 6:30-8:30 p.m. 3080 Williams Ave., Las Cruces.

## Jan. 17

- Club: Join the Plant Club hosted by Letty at Truth or Consequences Brewing Company in Las Cruces. Connect with fellow plant lovers in the area. Bring snacks, plants, and ideas to share. The meeting is on the shaded patio. Everyone is welcome, including well-behaved dogs. Free. 5 p.m. 2001 E Lohman Ave., Las Cruces.

## Jan. 22

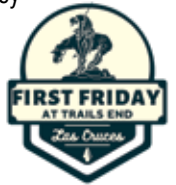
- Poetry night: Amaro Winery presents Spoken Word/Poetry Night hosted by Autumn V. Sign up to perform or just come to enjoy the

talents of Las Cruces. Karaoke will follow at 9 p.m. after the poetry. Free. 7 p.m. 402 S Melendres St., Las Cruces.

## Feb. 6

- Dinner: The Las Cruces Convention Center presents Chef Creates: Le Grande Dinner with Chef Armando. This intimate dining experience is a multi-course meal a la française. Some items on the menu include Wild Mushroom Boule with Clear Herb Broth, Citrus Scallop Crudo, and Duck Rillettes Tartlet with Port Wine Reduction. \$85 per person. 6-9 p.m. 680 E University Ave., Las Cruces.

- Trolley rides: Enjoy horse trolley rides throughout Historic Mesquite Street during First Friday Art Ramble. Rides are free, but feel free to bring cash to tip. While there are no rides during January, there will be a violinist playing on the trolley for a special Valentine's Day-themed ride on Feb. 6. Boarding is along Mesquite Street at Trails End Gallery. Free. 4-8 p.m. 1732 N Mesquite St., Las Cruces.



## Feb. 7

- Class: Want to learn more about sourdough bread making? Sun City Sawdust DIY Studio will have a class for guests who have already taken the beginner course or who have attempted to bake at least three loaves of sourdough on their own. The first part of the class is for answering any questions or concerns and having an in-depth discussion. The second half will be a step-by-step course in shaping and decorating buns. \$55 per person (tickets must be purchased in advance). 1-3 p.m. 910 E Redd Rd. Ste. H, El Paso, Texas.

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# Community Connection: A local staple's fall tradition

By Sylvia Quintanilla

For the past three years, Chilitos Restaurant & Cantina has kicked off the fall season by having a pumpkin painting contest. Employees from each of the restaurant's two locations put their creative skills on full display for guests to enjoy and judge.

Devin Perez, the manager of the Chilitos on Valley Drive, has been working in the family business his whole life. Perez explained that each location purchases the pumpkins for its employees and the winners of the competition receive a gift card. Each Chilitos location has its own contest and winner.

"It's a fun thing to do for the Halloween season," Perez said.

Chilitos has been a family-owned and operated establishment since 1997. They are known for their homemade recipes and

traditional Mexican comfort food. Each location has a rustic feel with plenty of Southwest decor to make any Las Cruces visitor feel right at home.

Perez's sister is the manager of the Foothills location, where this past year, there were a dozen employees who entered the contest. At the Valley location, there were between 12-15 employees who participated.

The design submissions included a Venus flytrap, a Queen of Hearts, and of course, a few Jack Skellington pumpkins. One of the winners painted a puffer fish. The holidays can be a busy time for restaurants, but this contest has become a fun tradition for Chilitos and their employees.

"It [the contest] kind of just starts our holiday stuff," Perez explained. "For the holidays, we like to decorate real nice and

do fun things for the employees. It just kind of kicks off the holidays in a fun, spirited, way."

Once the pumpkins are turned in, they are on display at both locations until Halloween. Customers vote on their favorite pumpkin and Perez counts the votes periodically throughout October.

As one can imagine, the employees become very competitive during the pumpkin contest. Perez said the annual competition is now a favorite among employees and customers alike.

For more information on Chilitos Restaurant & Cantina, please visit [chilitoslc.com](http://chilitoslc.com) to view the menu, order their merchandise or salsa, or place an online order at either location. You can also follow the restaurant on Facebook and Instagram.



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## Convening of the 2026

# LEGISLATIVE SESSION

By G. Buck

The session of the Fifty-seventh Legislature is underway in New Mexico and will last for 30 days. If you visit the state's legislative portal, you will find a variety of bills already in the queue awaiting the commencement of this ceremonious yearly event. Some of the current bills available to view range from "Land Grant-Merced Acequia Infrastructure Trust Fund" to "Juvenile Firearm Use and Background Checks". It can be assumed that two major ongoing topics pontificated upon by many legislators on the hill are juvenile crime/CYFD early prevention and medical malpractice. These items have been a multi-year hemorrhage benefitting both parties' divisive rhetoric.

New Mexico is a place of grandeur and beauty – one of the last pieces of wild west in the United States. The state also has severe economic challenges which have generationally not seen much improvement. In Las Cruces, juveniles' access to firearms has increased significantly. Additionally, with ongoing water scarcity and a dry winter further foreseeable than summer's dawn, Doña Ana County has allowed the construction of a data center in a territory known for water contamination issues. These centers are presumably working the hill with heavily paid lobbyist artillery.

The agenda awaiting our elected officials is vast and in need of remedy. Something that should be handled with the utmost care and positioned far beyond party lines

is a resolution for rising crime and the audit proposed on a house bill for CYFD.

This comes as a two-part meal which can't be solved by digging heels into the sand. We can say the same for the loss of many of our medical professionals. We have a failed medical system that comes with high exposure to litigation for providers who are often articulated as pawns by lawyers on the hill, as opposed to a service reconstructing the systematic functions. During a short stint of business prospecting in West Texas and spending nine months of my sophomore year in the rural region, I met someone who is now a lawyer in Texas and New Mexico. He specializes in real estate and malpractice, his partner has banned them from pursuing medical cases, as he is an emergency room doctor. Do we want to become the legal tourism known for volatility? One would hope not.

An amendment to the current bill could reposition the state as a multi-faceted economic playground ranging from energy, to technology, to retirees. Outside of multi-generational unresolved poverty, a diversified economy can assist families in climbing out of the trenches while lowering juvenile crime rates. New Mexico pre-2008 was a growing territory for people seeking second and third homes in their retirement. While most people think of Albuquerque as a crime city before anything else, it has an intricate economy made up of stakeholders investing in the city, which has contributed to a blossoming

culinary scene and technological advancements. Las Cruces has the ability to self-regulate and reinvest – it is both a local and state issue the city faces and no doubt we will have more than one well-paid lobbyist in Santa Fe. In our state's major metropolitan areas with temperate and arid climates, we should be seeing a rush of residential purchases, but we've seen a lull, partly due to our medical reputation.

Uniquely, our state was the birthplace of Microsoft, the former billionaire Malofo family (whose fortune was found in beer distribution, professional sports, and casinos), and Array Technologies, founded by Ron Corio, who became our first in-state billionaire and streamlined the solar industry. We are a state of international art, some of the rarest outdoor wonders found south of Yellowstone, and the originating factors in some of the country's largest industries.

Political greed has held up advancement at each session especially when it comes to addressing the aforementioned. This short thirty-day session will be a loaded docket with some very important issues to address, impacting the quality of life for our residents and our economic foreground. While looking ahead, we must also analyze the cost of tech centers on our water resources, which affect our metropolitan zones and healthcare for both our young and aging population, and the exponential growth we can harvest by repositioning ourselves as a business-friendly and educational leader.

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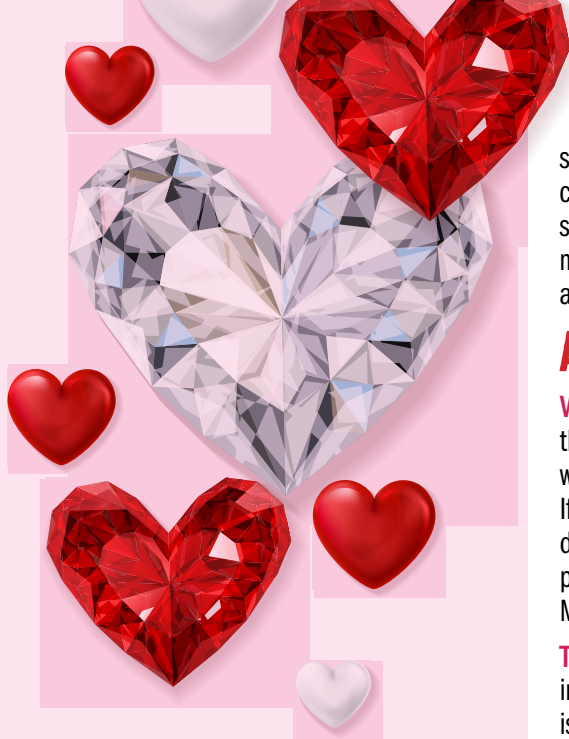
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## Valentine's Day GEMS

By Riley Robertson and G. Buck

If you're debating where to spend Valentine's Day this year, we've got you covered! No matter where you're located in New Mexico, any of these restaurants are sure to provide a romantic atmosphere and a delicious meal. Here are some of our go-to spots.

### SANTA FE:

**315 Restaurant & Wine Bar:** With intentionally curated seasonal menu items and a large selection of fine wine, you're sure to impress the one you love by bringing them to 315 to enjoy an upscale meal. Located at 315 Old Santa Fe Trail. Make a reservation: (505)-986-9190

**Midtown Bistro:** You're in for a treat at Midtown Bistro, where fine local dining and a warm ambience meet. Be sure to ask about the pasta of the evening, as the chef is always creating unique combinations. Located at 901 W San Mateo Rd. Suite A. Make a reservation: (505)-820-3121

**Market Steer Steakhouse:** If you have a steak dinner in mind for Valentine's Day, this might be your answer. Not only do they

serve plenty great accompaniments to any cut of steak, but they also have a broad drink selection (including an excellent happy hour menu). Located at 213 Washington Ave. Make a reservation: (505)-365-1010

### ALBUQUERQUE:

**Wolf n Swallow:** Especially known for their wine and caviar menus, this local gem will bring some excitement to the big day. If you're more into drinks and upscale hors d'oeuvres than a big meal, this spot might be perfect for you. Located at 414 Central Ave. Make a reservation: resy.com

**The Artichoke Cafe:** A staple for decades in the Albuquerque area, The Artichoke Cafe is a lovely place to dine with your loved one. Their menu has some delicious options for both drinks and dinner. And of course, make sure to try the fried artichoke hearts! Located at 424 Central Ave. (next door to Wolf n Swallow). Make a reservation: (505)-243-0200 or on resy.com

**Indigo Crow Cafe:** While Indigo Crow is always a great dining experience, they will have a special four-course prix fixe menu on Valentine's Day, perfect for a romantic evening. Be sure to call soon to secure a table! Located at 4515 Corrales Rd. Make a reservation: (505)-898-7000 or (715)-293-6476

**Campo:** At Los Poblanos' primary restaurant, Campo, seasonal menus, local spirits, and farm-fresh ingredients are at the heart of the meal. A Valentine's Day dinner is no exception - consider dining at one of ABQ's most notable establishments to celebrate! Located at 4803 Rio Grande Blvd. Make a reservation (required): (505)-985-5000

**Char:** Hotel Andaluz's restaurant, Char, is another lovely choice for Valentine's Day. With elevated steak entrees from a Jospier grill and a twist on traditional New Mexican cuisine, these menu items are impressive and exquisite. Located at 125 2nd St. NW. Make a reservation: (505)-923-9080 or on opentable.com

### CLOUDCROFT:

**Big Daddy's Diner:** A comforting and fresh homestyle menu makes Big Daddy's a fabulous place to dine. We highly recommend

ordering the catfish! Located at 1705 James Canyon Hwy 82. Make a reservation: (575)-682-1224

**1899 At The Lodge:** The Lodge is well-known and charming, and its dining experience is no different. Whether you visit the lounge or the restaurant, a delightful seasonal menu awaits. Located at 601 Corona Pl. Make a reservation: (575)-682-2566

### DEMING:

**Adobe Deli Restaurant:** This local spot has a more relaxed ambience, along with sports-viewing seating options. With locally-sourced ingredients and a beautiful atmosphere, Adobe Deli has something for everyone! Located at 3970 Lewis Flats Rd. Make a reservation: (575)-546-0361

### LAS CRUCES:

**Sunset Grill:** At Sonoma Ranch Golf Course, the Sunset Grill has a variety of specials and options, including Fresh Fish Friday (which falls on Valentine's Day this year). This is a dining experience you're sure to remember! Located at 1274 Golf Club Rd. Make a reservation: (575)-521-1826

**Hacienda de Mesilla:** A classy and delicious dining experience is waiting for you and your loved one at this Mesilla staple. No matter what you're in the mood for, there are plenty of signature dishes and handcrafted drinks to enjoy! Located at 1891 Avenida de Mesilla. Make a reservation: (575)-652-4953

### EL PASO:

**Casa Pantera:** This spot has a creative and scrumptious menu, primarily with fresh seafood and steak options. Indulge in one (or more) of their tasty cocktails and appetizers. Located at 3015 Pershing Dr. Make a reservation: opentable.com

**Anson 11:** This restaurant has both a downstairs bistro and an upstairs with fine dining, both promised to satisfy your Valentine's Day dinner expectations. While the bistro is more casual and comforting, the upstairs is a more classic and upscale experience. Located at 303 N Oregon St. Call to make a reservation: (915)-504-6400

# TIPS FROM A SOCIALITE: Receiving guests

Sponsored by Distinction Realty, Inc.



By G. Buck

How does one receive guests? It's often customary to wait beside an open door to provide an element of warmth. Consider positioning yourself to the exterior of the door to allow your guests more movement and space upon entering. Tell the guests where coats and purses can be placed and where drinks can be enjoyed. If someone is arriving for an extended stay, I always believe you should go out to the vehicle to greet them more intimately and help with luggage. If you really want to up the ante, have a secondary host or wait staff hold a tray with a drink and a sweet treat for the guests upon arrival. If you're going at this solo, simply place a waist-high table beside you for easy pick-up.

When welcoming visitors to a meeting or party at one's house, the line can build up; if you're the guest, be sure to keep greetings short and light – you can catch up in depth once the host has climbed over the stressors of everyone arriving. Also, remember the art of timing – don't be too early or right on time. For a party, one should try to arrive 10-15 minutes after the set start time. The host will likely appreciate those last extra moments to ready themselves and the event.

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# A Valentine's Date Night SPECIAL

By Sarina Wasson

## Green Chile Lasagna

### BÉCHAMEL SAUCE:

- 4 cups whole milk
- 8 tbsp butter
- ½ cup flour
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp white pepper
- 2-3 cloves freshly chopped garlic
- 6-8 roasted and chopped mild Hatch green chiles

1 cup fresh spinach

In a small saucepan, gently warm milk over low heat. Do not bring to a boil. In a separate medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add flour, whisking constantly to form a smooth paste. Cook roux one to two minutes. Be careful not to let the sauce brown. Gradually add warm milk to roux, whisking continuously to

prevent lumps. Continue cooking and stirring for about five to seven minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in garlic, spinach, and green chile.

### RICOTTA MIXTURE:

15 oz ricotta cheese

1 egg

2 tbsp chopped basil

Mix ricotta, egg, and chopped basil. Then set aside.

### ASSEMBLE LASAGNA:

16 oz mild Italian sausage

1 box oven-ready lasagna noodles

16 oz shredded mozzarella

2-3 oz shaved parmesan

2 tbsp freshly chopped Italian parsley

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Brown sausage in a pan and remove grease. In a 9x13 casserole dish, layer: sauce, pasta, ricotta mixture, mozzarella, sausage, repeat. For the top layer, use pasta, the remainder of sauce and mozzarella, and

top with shaved parmesan and fresh parsley. Cover with a double layer of foil and bake for one hour. Uncover and bake for another 10 minutes to brown the cheese. Enjoy!

### CHEF'S NOTES & PRO TIPS:

This version of my recipe includes fresh herbs and garlic. You may substitute with dry seasonings and jarred garlic for less labor. Most scratch recipes that include cheese benefit from grating your own cheese for better flavor and richness – store bought shredded cheese is coated in flour and isn't of the same quality. However, store bought shredded cheese is another shortcut when less labor is desired. When choosing the level of heat, I prefer a mild to medium chile that complements this Italian dish with the aromatics of the crop rather than with the heat. Also, if you don't remove every speck of the roasted peel, do not fret – it adds to the texture and smokiness of your sauce. Finally, I prefer stoneware cookware for the majority of my casseroles. It contributes to even cooking throughout and enhances flavor.



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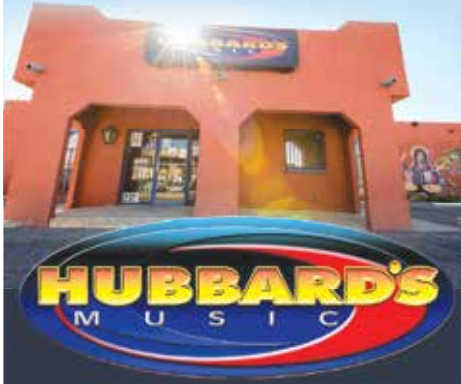
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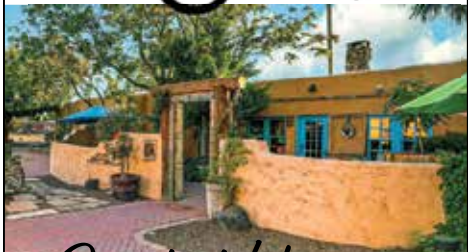


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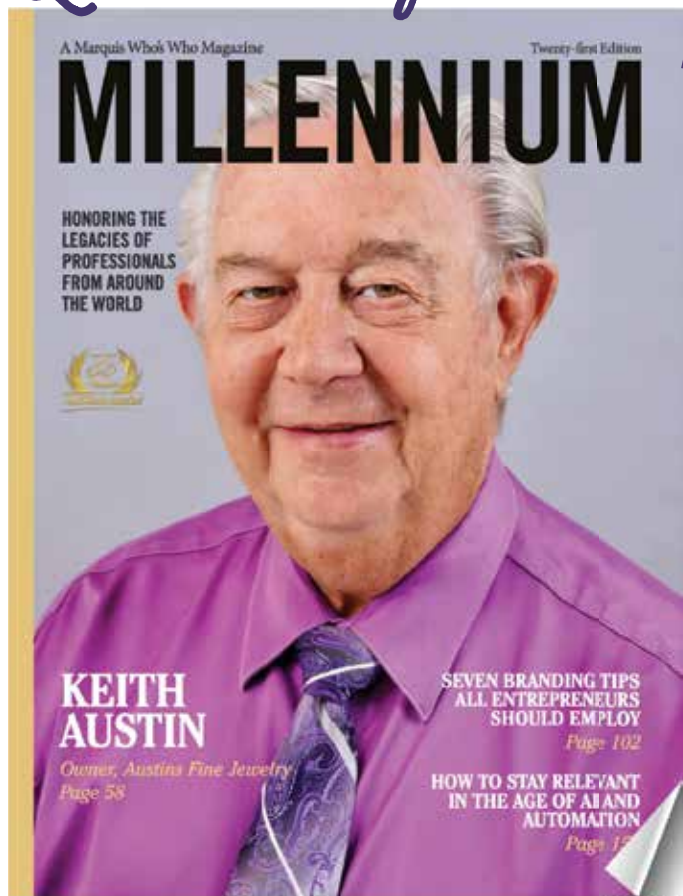
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