

A Legacy Local Monthly Publication

March 2025

The Historic

Mesilla Valley

Spring Refresh

2025 Las Cruces International Film Festival Schedule

Trails End and Beyond

Recipe: Coconut Shrimp



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Featured on the Cover:
Custom Pool Design
Chris Reyes,
Frontline Contractors

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FROM THE *publisher's desk*

Welcome to our spring cleaning issue, where you can find a guide to all things home improvement, from draperies to auctioning off those dust-collecting trinkets. Check out the community calendar and get connected with the upcoming Las Cruces International Film Festival. Whether you're wanting to take part in a showing or party amongst the socials here in Las Cruces,

April has a little bit of everything for you. Join us all season long at Trails End Gallery and learn about the ever-changing atmosphere of North Mesquite Street as Gary Biel reinvests in our community and grows First Friday. As you turn the pages, you can also read about Biel's hopes for the historic El Camino Real as he gambles it all on hoping to see a prolific art scene take root.



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Calendar OF EVENTS

Every Saturday

– Story Time: Free story time for children every Saturday at the Books Are GEMS Bookstore. The first 15 families get two free story time books. Join the fun in person or on Facebook Live. Free. 11 a.m.-12 p.m. 7744 N. Loop Drive Suite B, El Paso, Texas.

– STEAM Saturdays: What happens when...? Experiments with the Railroad Museum. Plan for a 30-minute program with 15 minutes for questions if needed. 2:15 p.m.-3 p.m. Ages 13-17. Free. Railroad Museum, 351 N. Mesilla St., Las Cruces.

March 10-31

– Art on display: “The Birds and The Bees” Acrylic paintings by Alyssa Trujillo. 4 p.m.-7 p.m. MAS Art Gallery, 144 Wyatt Dr., Las Cruces.

March 14

– Mardi Gras: Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery will host a Mardi Gras celebration featuring Cajun food and cocktail specials. There will be live music from Rio Grande Revelers (6-9 p.m.) and C.W. Ayon Duo (10 p.m.-12 a.m.). \$5 cash cover. 6 p.m.-12 a.m. 119 N. Main St., Las Cruces.

March 15

– Run: Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine will host a 5K Holi Run. Holi is the Hindu celebration of the festival of colors, recognizing the beginning of spring. The powdered colors used will be non-toxic and washable. The course begins at the large fountain in front of Burrell and continues across the NMSU campus. After the run, join the Burrell Health and Wellness

Club on the back patio for more colors, food, great raffle prizes, and activities hosted by various BCOM student organizations. Register in advance at the URL: <https://forms.gle/Y6DS4Qw1GNc8HT7B6>. Donation based, with special perks available based on the amount of donation. Check in begins at 8 a.m. and the run starts at 9 a.m. 3501 Arrowhead Drive, Las Cruces.

– Campfire Kitchen: Ranger Mike from Fort Selden Historic Site will cook the Irish American classic dish, corned beef and cabbage. Ranger Mike will share his family's century-old recipe and give a talk about how soldiers have shared their culture through food. Food samples will be limited. \$5 for adults, children 16 and under free. 10-11 a.m. 1280 Fort Selden Rd., Radium Springs, New Mexico.

March 16

– Market: The third annual Selena Tribute Market will be held at the Mesa Plaza. The market is in memory of Tejano singer Selena Quintanilla. Guests can browse over 120 vendors and food trucks, as well as enjoy live music. Free. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Upper Valley Artist & Farmers Market, 7930 N. Mesa St., El Paso, Texas.

– St. Patty's Day Party: Family friendly St. Patrick's Day event by Kaleidoscope Art Market. Food trucks, music, vendors, Leprechaun cosplay contest, craft beer and more. 4 p.m.-10 p.m. Free. Craft Rhythm & Brews, 1301 Texas Ave., El Paso, Texas.

March 20

– Camino de Los Artistas: Southwest art expo featuring local art galleries: Trails End Gallery, Redd's, 925 Gallery, and Las Muchachas de

Las Cruces Creativity Studio. Wine tasting and Hors D'oeuvres. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. \$10 entry with portion of proceeds to benefit the Mesquite Historic District Art Ramble. Amador Patio Bar & Grill, 302 S. Main St., Suite B, Las Cruces.

March 21

– Museum: The Museum of Nature and Science will host Moonlight: Adult Night at the Museums. The theme of the event will be “Moonlight, Moscato, and Music.” Guests can stroll through exhibits with an adult beverage from Dry Point Distillers. Other attractions include local music performances, food trucks on the courtyard areas, and a historical storyteller dressed as a Buffalo Soldier. 21+. Free entry and refreshments, cash bar. 5-9 p.m. 411 N. Main St., Las Cruces.

March 23

– Taylor Nation: Tribute to Taylor Swift. Enjoy classic songs throughout the different eras. Doors open at 7 p.m., local band at 7:30 p.m., main show at 9 p.m. 21 and over event. Free. Speaking Rock, 122 S. Old Pueblo Rd., El Paso, Texas.

– The Emo Night Tour: DJ will be playing emo music in a dance club atmosphere. 8 p.m.-10 p.m., 18 and over event. General admission \$20. Tickets available on lowbrowpalace.com. Lowbrow Palace, 1006 Texas Ave., El Paso, Texas.

March 29

– “The Wizard of Oz” Day: Thomas Branigan Memorial Library will host a celebration in honor of “The Wizard of Oz” and “Wicked.” In addition to a movie viewing, there will be family



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crafts, cupcake decorating, a costume contest, and trivia. Free. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. 200 E. Picacho Ave., Las Cruces.

– The Elevation Fashion Show: First annual event will feature the original designs of Nanka Clothing, LLC. All white attire only. 7 p.m. General admission \$35, Runway Seating \$45. Tickets available on eventbrite.com. The Garden Venue, 12400 Montwood Dr., El Paso, Texas

April 4

– First Friday Art Ramble Downtown. Two new exhibits: “2024 All City High School Art Show” at the Museum of Art on display until May 4.



April 5

– Storybook Breakfast: Ever want to have breakfast with your favorite storybook characters? Local families can make that wish come true at the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum. Families will be able to meet and dine with the storybook characters and collect their autographs in a special keepsake book. Tickets are available at uwsnm.org/storybook.

Adults \$10, children ages 3-12 are \$5, and children under the age of 3 are free. Two different breakfast seatings at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. 4100 Dripping Springs Rd., Las Cruces.

– Science Fest: With over 100 interactive exhibits designed for students in grades Pre-K to 8th grade, there is something for the whole family to enjoy at the El Paso Science Festival. This festival has exhibits by both students and professional scientists. The lecture series will hold presentations hourly by scientists who will speak on recent challenges and discoveries. Free. 10 a.m. 1 Civic Center Plaza, El Paso, Texas.

– iLuminate: The Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts presents iLuminate, a fusion technology and dance show with a cast of the country’s top dancers, performing to top hits from the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Public buffet begins at 5 p.m. with green chile beef stew for \$25; Founder’s Room Dinner begins at 5 p.m. with herb roasted prime rib for \$55. Tickets are available at spencertheater.com. \$49-69. 7-9 p.m. 108 Spencer Rd., Alto, New Mexico.

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2025 LAS CRUCES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

April 9th | Opening Night Film - Brewmance 6:30PM, 6:45PM, 7:00PM, 7:15PM
VIP After Party - La Posta @ 9:00 PM

Thursday APRIL 10

	THEATRE A	THEATRE B	THEATRE C	THEATRE D	THEATRE A	THEATRE B	THEATRE C	THEATRE D	DACC STUDIO
10:00 AM	Take it Away 10:00 AM-11:30AM	Cherry Juice 10:00AM-11:45AM	Pokut 10:00AM-11:30AM	Narrative Shorts 1 10:00AM-11:30AM	Animated Shorts 1 10:00 AM-11:00AM	Water Lilies 10:00AM-12:00pm	Documentary Shorts 3 10:00AM-11:00AM	Foley Workshop 10:30AM-11:30AM	
11:00 AM					Zozobra: 100 Years of Fire and Redemption 11:30am-12:30pm		Woolly 11:30-1:00PM	Screenwriting Panel w/ Ed Stone, Don Foster and Bill True 12:00PM-1:00PM	
12:00 PM	Narrative Shorts 2 12:00 PM-1:00PM	Local Shorts 1 12:00PM-1:00pm	THE SOUND OF NIGHT 12:00-1:40PM	On the Edge of Freedom 12:00 PM-1:15pm					
1:00 PM					High School Student Shorts 1:00PM-3:00PM	Gloria 12:30PM-2:30PM	American Hemp Farmer 1:30PM-3:30PM	Independent Filmmaking Panel w/ Cyrus Nowrasteh 1:30 PM-2:30PM	
2:00 PM	Homecoming 1:30PM-2:45PM	Silent Beauty 1:30PM-3:00PM	Preemptive Listening 2:00PM-3:30PM	A Conversation w/ Helen Hunt @ NMSU Center for the Arts 2:00pm-3:00PM					
3:00 PM	Documentary Shorts 2 3:00PM-4:00PM	Local Shorts 2 3:30PM-5:00pm		Documentary Shorts 1 2:00-3:15pm	Local Student Shorts 3:15PM-5:00PM	STUDENT SHORTS 2 3:00PM-4:15PM		Stunt Workshop Social 4:00PM-6:00PM	
4:00 PM			THE LOVE ROOM 4:00PM-5:30PM	Toprak 3:30 PM-5:15PM			Local Shorts 3 4:00PM-5:30PM	TWO OF A KIND 4:30PM-5:15pm	Filmmaker Social 4:00PM-6:00PM
5:00 PM	Student Shorts 1 4:30PM-5:30PM				Horror Shorts 5:30PM-6:30PM	The Weird Kidz 5:00pm-6:35pm	I Didn't See You There 5:45pm-7:00pm	Local Shorts 4 5:30PM-6:30PM	
6:00 PM			International Shorts 1 6:00PM-7:00PM	Removal of the Eye 5:30 PM-7:00PM					
7:00 PM	Helen Hunt AS GOOD AS IT GETS+Q&A 6:15PM-8:50PM	Helen Hunt AS GOOD AS IT GETS+Q&A 6:45PM-9:20PM	Helen Hunt AS GOOD AS IT GETS 7:15PM-9:35PM	Helen Hunt AS GOOD AS IT GETS 7:15PM-9:35PM	Somewhere in Montana 7:00PM-9:15PM	The YOUNG MESSIAH w/ Director Cyrus Nowrasteh+Q&A 7:00PM-9:00PM	The YOUNG MESSIAH w/ Director Cyrus Nowrasteh+Q&A 7:15PM-9:15PM		
8:00 PM									
9:00 PM									
VIP After Party @ Cineport 9:00 PM					VIP After Party @ Salud De Mesilla 9:00 PM				

● NARRATIVE SHORTS 1

- Evil I
- Monitor
- Everything Goes Dark
- Dear Mama
- Goodnight, Moon
- David Se Va

● NARRATIVE SHORTS 2

- Take Me Home
- ZZZ
- Ghost Girl
- RAT!

● NARRATIVE SHORTS 3

- Death Pays Flora A Visit
- Are You Awake?
- A Lien
- The Old Young Crow
- Happy Birthday Bitch

● DOCUMENTARY SHORTS 1

- The Feeling of Being Close to You: How Forgive Your Mother
- Between Earth and Sky
- Fenice
- Sangre Violenta
- Beneath the Same Sky

● DOCUMENTARY SHORTS 2

- Fierro
- Hemingway
- The Circle
- Radical Tenderness

● DOCUMENTARY SHORTS 3

- When the Gifts Arrive
- Kylie
- Forward
- Swimming with Butterflies
- The Art of Looking

● DOCUMENTARY SHORTS 3

- When the Gifts Arrive
- Kylie
- Forward
- Swimming with Butterflies
- The Art of Looking

● LOCAL SHORTS 1

- Forgive Us Mother For We Have Sinned
- Art of Love
- Artist at Heart
- We're The Cat's Meow
- The Cowgirl
- Pool Toys
- Vax

● LOCAL SHORTS 2

- Angelito
- Equino
- Savior
- Monochromic
- Lucy's Room
- The Father The Son
- Trick

● LOCAL SHORTS 3

- Arto
- Mother Trees
- Weasel
- The Trickster
- Sasha

● LOCAL SHORTS 4

- Who's Afraid
- Wherever That May Be
- Contingency
- Rivals

● LOCAL SHORTS 5

- Pivot
- Good Writers Are Rare
- The Monster
- Fuck You and Your Movie
- The Wedding Night
- Deserted Delirium

● STUDENT SHORTS 1

- The Spirit Became Flesh
- Forgive Me Father
- Adams Pools
- A Love Letter to the Light
- Chicken
- El Guardian

● STUDENT SHORTS 2

- Sirena
- Supermarket Affairs
- Darker
- La Cumbia (Of What Could've Been)

● HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

- How Ethnic Minority Festivals Are Becoming Part of Hong Kong's Culture
- In Between
- Aglow: The Prequel
- The Legend of Wild Wes
- The Rise and Fall of Hong Kong Cinema
- Thunderbird and Killer Whale
- As You Wish
- Cold
- Aileen
- Dark Horse

● LOCAL STUDENT SHORTS

- Star Crossed
- Anna of Calle Cuatro
- Southwestern Sword
- Unfinished Business
- Dirt Track Magic
- Imogen
- Der Schneider

● HORROR SHORTS

- Scooter
- Rhyme or Die
- Dream Creep
- Alicia
- The Influencer
- The Visitor

● INTERNATIONAL SHORTS 1

- Animal Transport
- She Always Wins
- Original Skin
- The Shore

● INTERNATIONAL SHORTS 2

- AirHostess-737
- Poppy's Saturn
- Our Males Our Females
- Los Mosquitos
- Tall Dark and Handsome

● ANIMATED SHORTS 1

- In Half
- Bird drone
- Starry Eyed Duckling
- Under the Thicket
- Ednora
- Runaways

● ANIMATED SHORTS 2

- Kingdom
- Crowtege
- Confetti
- Illusion
- Layla
- Zoon

● LGBTQIA+

- The Singing Telegram
- To Be a Bruja
- Pretty Boi
- Summers End
- What is Sex?
- Purple Hours
- Clare
- Trifecta

● MUSIC VIDEOS

- Two Door by Mike
- Marley Hale "On Your Knees"
- Stranger to Myself by Taylor Paul
- Grady Hodnett's I'd love you more"
- Summer Nights
- Vamos al Mar
- Calvin K
- Kome On by Dsavage
- Endless Love
- Limerencia
- Dance With Me Miracle
- May
- OMT Miracle
- Dance With Me - Miracle
- Integrate
- Forbidden Fruit
- The Eyes Chico

Saturday APRIL 12

	THEATRE A	THEATRE B	THEATRE C	THEATRE D	RIO GRANDE	THEATRE A	THEATRE B	THEATRE C
10:00 AM	Narrative Shorts 3 10:00 AM-11:15am	Femme Frontera Selections 10:00 AM-11:00AM	Animated Shorts 2 10:00 AM-11:00AM	Coastal Falls 10:00am-12:15am			Best Screenplay 10:00 AM	Best Documentary Feature 10:30 AM
11:00 AM		International Shorts 2 11:15-12:30PM	LGBTQIA+ Films 11:30AM-1:15PM		CASTING PANEL 11:00am-1:00pm	Best Shorts 10:30 AM		
12:00 PM	THE UNEXPECTEDES 11:30AM-1:15PM						Audience Choice 12:00 PM	Best Cinematography 12:30 PM
1:00 PM		Music Videos 12:45pm-2:00PM				Best Director 12:30 PM		
2:00 PM	3 1:30PM-3:30PM	Local Shorts 5 2:30PM-3:30PM	Ugly Little Monkeys 3:45PM	Hidden Flora 3:15PM	Star Trek Panel w/ Michelle Hurd 2:00PM-3:00pm		Brief Tender Light 2:00pm-3:30pm	Prop Making Workshop 2:00pm-3:00pm
3:00 PM						Grand Jury 2:45 PM		
4:00 PM	48 Hour Film Challenge Films 4:00 PM-6:00PM	48 hour Film Challenge Films 4:00 PM-6:00pm	48 Hour Film Challenge Films 4:00 PM-6:00pm	Las Cruces Public School Film Fest Showcase 3:45PM-5:30PM				
5:00 PM								
6:00 PM								
Awards Ceremony @ Rio Grande Theatre 7:00pm VIP After Party @ Rio Grande Winery 9:00 PM								

Sunday APRIL 13

- Narrative Shorts
- Documentary Shorts
- Local Shorts
- Narrative Features
- Documentary Features

- Animated Shorts
- Student Shorts
- Music Videos
- Special Screenings
- Panels & Workshops

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Spring Refresh

By Sarah Boothe

As the warm desert winds of Southern New Mexico usher in the spring season, homeowners and businesses are eager to embrace the opportunity for transformation. The arrival of longer days and milder temperatures brings a sense of renewal. Spring has long been seen as a time of rejuvenation – a season that symbolizes new beginnings and fresh starts. In the design and construction world, spring is often the perfect time for both professionals and homeowners to revamp spaces and breathe new life into their properties. A “spring refresh” in the context of design and construction refers to making changes or updates to existing designs, whether by introducing new design elements, refreshing finishes, or rethinking how spaces function.

This time of year not only brings about a desire for change, but also aligns with a surge in activity for contractors and designers, as it offers an opportunity to capitalize on the warm weather and increased daylight hours. We explored the impact of the spring refresh on design and construction to provide insights from professionals in the industry, including representatives from Adobe Kitchens, Frontline Contractors, and Spring Crest Custom Draperies.

With more people spending time indoors

during the colder months, springtime often sparks the urge to make changes that improve both the appearance and usability of a space – including kitchens. Alyssa Taylor, a designer and co-founder of Adobe Kitchens, shared her journey in transforming home cabinetry into a comprehensive, one-stop design solution. Taylor’s husband is the founder of Classy Closets, specializing in custom closets. The company evolved from responding to customer requests for kitchen upgrades, to expanding their offerings from closets to complete kitchen renovations. This integrated approach ensures a seamless experience from design and ordering to installation, making home transformations both efficient and stylish.

Drawing on her and her husband’s experience with cabinetry for both remodels and new home builds, Taylor emphasized the importance of functionality and flexibility. By partnering with various cabinet providers and collaborating with complementary businesses like Rolling Stone Countertops, Adobe Kitchens delivers tailored designs that meet individual customer needs while streamlining the entire remodeling process.

Looking ahead to the spring season, Taylor highlighted emerging trends that infuse warmth and freshness into home

design. “I think there’s a steadiness to cabinets because they’re a big part of your home,” she said, while also noting a shift towards softer, more inviting hues. “We have one cabinet line that’s coming out with a very light, creamy green color; they’re calling it ‘moss’ – a trend that offers a subtle alternative to bold colors, adding a fresh yet timeless appeal to any space.

Emphasizing regional influences, Taylor explained how the Southwest’s bright, sunlit environment calls for lighter, more airy designs. “In the Southwest, people gravitate toward very light colors because of just the sunlight,” she said, focusing on the importance of creating kitchens that feel open and inviting. Taylor’s vision offers homeowners a refreshing blend of practicality and aesthetic charm – perfect for a spring update.

Who doesn’t love to bask in the fresh, cool water of a pool during the hottest days of summer? Pools are a must-have in the Southwest, with temperatures exceeding 100 degrees on most July days. Luckily for Las Cruces residents, we have pool builders like Chris Reyes, owner of Frontline Contractors, in our midst. For Reyes, who is a specialist in custom pool design, spring holds special significance. “What I love about spring is seeing everything come to life,” he remarked. For many, it is a time when the world around us transforms, and contractors like Frontline get to help create those transformations in people’s backyards.

Reyes draws inspiration from every project, often immersing himself in the details of his clients’ homes. “I love going inside my clients’ houses to see what they love, then incorporating that into my designs,” he said. This personal touch allows him to create spaces that feel both custom and deeply connected to the homeowner’s tastes.

Reyes’ design style is a fusion of various



Continued on Page 12►



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◀ Continued from Page 10

influences, drawing from both traditional and modern aesthetics. “I love the Santa Fe style, but I also love modern design. I love blending both, and I’m always excited to come up with new combinations for each project,” he explained. His creativity doesn’t stop at the local level; Reyes travels across the U.S., from Florida to Texas to California, gathering inspiration from diverse styles and incorporating them into his work. Traveling allows him to see all kinds of design trends and innovations, and bring those ideas back to his clients in this region.

In Southern New Mexico, the spring refresh is not just about updating homes – it’s about embracing the vibrant spirit of the season and bringing new life to both indoor and outdoor spaces. Whether through custom pools or tailored outdoor living areas, spring offers a unique chance to create an environment that is both functional and beautiful. With professionals like Chris Reyes at Frontline Contractors, residents can expect designs that are as diverse and inspiring as the landscape itself.

Spring Crest Custom Draperies is excited about spring refresh, as well. Spring Crest is a local, small business that celebrates a legacy dating back to 1976. The family-run business has grown into a trusted name in window treatments over nearly five decades. Jenni Hart, vice president, is also daughter-granddaughter, emphasizing how deeply personal and intertwined the company is with its heritage. With roots that began when her grandparents founded the business and a proud history that is marked by milestones over 49 years

of operation, this legacy continues to evolve with the changing times.

Innovation in design remains a cornerstone of their approach. The company’s signature style was further highlighted when Hart described their drapery technique: “If you look at the top of this drapery, it’s actually just a very simple rod pocket, and then they put in a stainless steel pleater,” she said. This design creates rounded pleats that ensure uniformity at both the top and bottom – a detail that sets their products apart and pays homage to traditional methods while embracing modern aesthetics.

Spring is the perfect time to upgrade and refresh home interiors, and Spring Crest Custom Draperies is at the forefront of integrating modern technology with classic style. A recent project exemplifies this blend: one client’s 20-year-old blackout honeycomb shade was replaced with a motorized version. These efficient motorized blinds can be set on a timer with rechargeable batteries in accordance with the patterns of the sun, keeping your home cool during the hottest parts of the day while maintaining heat in the evenings.

Beyond aesthetics, energy efficiency is a major trend in today’s home design. “I still want my house to be light and sunny and enjoy the elements, but at the same time I want my energy bill to be low,” Hart said. Modern solutions, such as honeycomb shades with insulating pockets and solar screens that block 90% of harmful UV rays, are making it easier than ever for homeowners to save energy – especially coupled with attractive incentives, like a \$1,200 tax credit from partnering

manufacturer Hunter Douglas. Hart recommended consumers explore ideas on sites like Pinterest to gain inspiration for window treatments, and then give Spring Crest a call to refresh their space this spring.

Local industry leaders are redefining what a spring refresh means. From Alyssa Taylor’s integrated approach at Adobe Kitchens, where a kitchen remodel becomes a seamless journey from design to installation, to Chris Reyes of Frontline Contractors, who brings his passion for custom pool designs to life, each project reflects a commitment to quality and innovation. Meanwhile, Jenni Hart of Spring Crest Custom Draperies reminds us that even long-standing family businesses can evolve and stay current with the needs of homeowners.

These transformations are not just about aesthetics – they’re also about efficiency and sustainability. With innovations like motorized, energy-saving window treatments and honeycomb shades that insulate and control sunlight, homeowners are finding smart solutions that keep their spaces cool and their energy bills low during the warmest days of the year.

Spring in the Southwest is more than a season. It is also a catalyst for renewal. Whether you’re inspired by the inviting kitchens at Adobe Kitchens, the creative outdoor living spaces envisioned by Frontline Contractors, or the timeless yet innovative designs from Spring Crest Custom Draperies, now is the time to reimagine your home. Let the spirit of spring guide you to explore new trends, harness energy efficient technology, and create a space that is both beautiful, refreshing, and smart.



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Artist Studios

Gary Biel
C.C. Cunningham
Carol Casavant
Robert Highsmith
Jewelry Works by Armando
Svea Peterson
Penny Simpson



TRAILS END *and beyond*

By Sylvia Quintanilla

Gary Biel has a vision for the art district in Las Cruces. Biel, who is an artist himself, owns Trails End Gallery, located at 1732 N. Mesquite St. He recently purchased more property in the Mesquite Historic District with the intent to expand and improve the area.

Biel is a former landscaper who began painting after he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. His father had a plumbing business in the building previously, which Biel then transformed into a gallery that breathed new life into the structure.

"That building next door [the gallery] – that was a house. My dad added this on as a shop," Biel began. "This is all one big room. It was a plumbing shop. Then I turned it into my landscaping shop. We had the pipe in here for sprinklers. And then, when I started getting sick and started doing art, I started building all this [the art studios]. So, it's evolved, and I think it's improved. That's my vision for Mesquite Street, is to make it better. Not to change it, but to make it improve and preserve what's here; take those old buildings, make them the best they can be."

Trails End Gallery is home to several artists, including Penny Simpson and C.C. Cunningham, whose artwork can be found in the various rooms of the gallery. In Simpson's room, the walls are adorned with her still life watercolors of fruits, green chile, florals, and even local wine. Cunningham has vibrant and modern art in her room, which is located just to the left of the gallery's entrance.

In addition to having their work on display, multiple artists have a studio in the space

where they can create – like Robert Highsmith, who paints in watercolors and acrylics, and recently began using oil paints again. Highsmith has a series of paintings depicting Stahmann Farms throughout the seasons. Armando Garcia is a jeweler who not only works with silver and turquoise but can also repair jewelry. Fiber artist Svea Peterson is a felter from Stockholm, Sweden. Peterson knows several Indigenous people who limit shaving their sheep to once a year so she can use their wool without causing harm to the animals. She makes table runners, bags, cat houses, scarves, and more. Biel also has his own studio space. He paints in acrylics, drawing much of his inspiration from desert landscapes and agriculture of the Southwest.

There are two other art galleries on North Mesquite that join Trails End: Gallery 925 and Unsettled Gallery and Studio. With the new properties, Biel is passionate about helping reverse the negative reputation of Mesquite Street and preserving it for generations to come.

Biel has deep roots in Las Cruces. He noted that his aunt founded the historic district and his great-great-grandfather, Pablo Melendres, drew the lines where Las Cruces was to be built. With this new venture, Biel hopes to one day see the area as the Camino Real Art District.

Two blocks down from Trails End at 1747 N. Mesquite St. is an old adobe house that was once rock-faced. The building is easily identifiable by the massive Italian Cypress tree outside. Biel said he is in talks with interested parties who may turn the space into a co-op gallery. With this idea, artists would not only have their

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Recipe

Coconut Shrimp

By G. Buck

INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup all-purpose flour or whole wheat flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 large eggs, beaten
3/4 cup Panko breadcrumbs or Italian breadcrumbs
1 cup sweetened or unsweetened shredded coconut

1 pound raw large shrimp, peeled and deveined with tails attached

1-2 cups vegetable oil, coconut oil, or olive oil (or until a medium skillet/pot is filled to ½-1 inch in depth)

Optional for topping: 1 tablespoon finely chopped cilantro

DIRECTIONS

Start with 3 medium bowls. Combine flour, salt, and pepper in one bowl. Beat the eggs in the second bowl. Combine breadcrumbs and coconut in the third bowl.

Dip the shrimp into the flour, then into the eggs, and then dredge the shrimp in the coconut mixture, pressing gently to adhere. You want a lot of coconut on each shrimp. Set the coated shrimp aside on a rack or plate as you coat the remaining shrimp.

Add enough oil to cover the bottom of a large skillet over medium heat and bring to 350 degrees; a candy thermometer works great to monitor the

temperature. Fry the coconut shrimp in batches of 5-6 shrimp at a time – but do not crowd them in the pan. Flip after 2 minutes and fry the other side for 2 minutes or until golden brown.

Place the finished coconut shrimp on a plate lined with a paper towel as you fry the rest. Sprinkle with finely chopped cilantro. Mix dipping sauce ingredients together and serve with shrimp.

Serve alongside a cabbage-based slaw with a light dressing.

Cover and store leftover shrimp in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.



SERVING SAUCE (optional)

3 tablespoons Thai chili sauce

6 tablespoons orange, peach, or apricot jam/preserves

*If you don't have Thai chili sauce, a healthy dose of rice vinegar added to the preserves works well!

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◀ Continued from Page 13

work on display, but they would be able to work in the gallery, as well.

Another adobe home Biel will be working

on is nearby at 1447 N. Mesquite St. He said while it already has a new roof, two rooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen, he will continue to work on making sure the building is comfortable for new tenants.

Biel's hopes for the properties are mainly centered around art, but he remarked that a coffee shop or ice cream parlor would fit in nicely for art lovers.

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