

Jazz at the Ranch 2024: A Spectacular Blend of Music, Cuisine and Community Support

By Adam Joseph, Rancho Cielo

Last month, in association with the Monterey Jazz Festival, Rancho Cielo hosted its second annual Jazz at the Ranch concert series and fundraiser. The extraordinary three-day event transformed Rancho Cielo into a haven of world-class music, gourmet cuisine and community spirit, with 100 percent of proceeds benefiting the organization's Arts and Mental Health Programs.

On Friday, attendees enjoyed the electrifying guitar work of longtime Bay Area bluesman Chris Cain and the local talent of the Monterey Jazz Festival Regional All-Star Jazz Combo. Saturday, acclaimed Australian singer-songwriter Sarah McKenzie performed heartfelt melodies that showcased her vocal versatility, while San Francisco crooner Nicolas Bearde and the dynamic Full Spectrum Jazz Band added a soulful touch of R&B.

The weekend closed with the vibrant seven-piece Latin Jazz Collective (featuring percussionist John Nava), who brought their infectious world beats, a dazzling warm-up before the weekend headliner, the iconic multi-Grammy Award winner Los Lobos, moved everyone to their feet. The East L.A. outfit's legendary blend of rock, Tex-Mex and Americana has touched fans worldwide for over 50 years. The natural setting of Rancho Cielo's intimate amphitheater, with sight lines across the Salinas Valley, provided a stunning sunset backdrop to the music.

In addition to the music, Jazz at the Ranch boasted an exceptional culinary experience, thanks to the partnerships of local chefs, restaurants, wineries and breweries that donated time, talent, food and beverages in support of the event.

Rancho Cielo's Drummond Culinary Academy students, who helped serve the food and created their own



Monterey Jazz Fest All Star Combo



Tacos to Go and Students



Bearde and Full Spectrum Jazz



Blues guitarist Chris Cain.



David Hidalgo of Grammy-winning Latino rock band Los Lobos.



Cesar Rosas of Los Lobos.

innovative apps, delighted attendees as much as the flavors. Academy students also had the opportunity to work alongside the chefs. The hands-on experience reiterated Rancho Cielo's commitment to empowering students through mentorship and real-world learning.

Participating eateries included Amapola, Ardent Culinaire Catering, Bayonet Grill, Cultura Carmel, H Jackson Events, Jerome's Carmel

Valley Market, Star Market, Stonies Taphouse & Bistro, Tacos on the Go, The Meatery and The Salad Shoppe. The wine and beer were provided by Folktale Winery & Vineyard, Other Brother Brewing Co. and Alvarado Street Brewery.

Some of Rancho Cielo's community partners had booths where guests could learn more about their organizations and support of Rancho Cielo,

including Harmony at Home, Monterey County Behavioral Health (MCBH), Montage Health's Ohana, University of California San Francisco Dyslexia Center and Hope, Horses & Kids. Rancho Cielo's Community Outreach Coordinator, Carlos Perales, was also on hand to highlight the unique case management model and holistic direct services provided to Rancho Cielo students.

Jazz at the Ranch is more than just another concert series; it celebrates community, resilience and the transformative power of music, art and education. The event brings people together to support Rancho Cielo while offering an experience filled with incredible music and tasty eats on the magnificent 100-acre campus. It also serves as a reminder of the incredible work that Rancho Cielo does for its students and the loyal support of the community. 🌿

Rancho Cielo is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that invests in all young people facing challenges for success through diploma education, vocational training, counseling and life skills development in a safe and affirming environment. RC's next fundraising event, the 15th annual Culinary Round-Up, will be on Sunday, Feb. 23, 2025, at the Portola Hotel & Spa in Monterey. Details at ranchocieloyc.org.