

KEMAH LIVING

**MEET
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*Publisher of
Kemah Living*



*Connecting Kemah Through
Media, Marketing & Signature Events*

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We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the **20th** of each month. Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas and photos to: deannalopez@bestversionmedia.com.

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Look, Mom, I made it.

Top of the world. Publisher of *Kemah Living*. Close to the water, surrounded by great people, somehow getting away with calling this work.

This month, I figured I'd finally make the magazine about me.

Yes, I said it.

Almost everything in this issue is either written by me, about me, or about something I absolutely love. So if you've ever wondered what goes on in my head, first of all, I'm sorry. Second, this issue should answer a few questions.

I'm talking about my sons, TJ and Dayan, who will always be my favorite athletes. I'm sharing my obsession with concert posters and one of my favorite artists, Chuck Sperry. I'm also talking about foie gras, caviar, and toasted brioche—because apparently subtlety was not the theme this month.

At this point in my life, I can honestly say I really enjoy what I do. I get to tell stories, promote great businesses, create events, meet interesting people, and somehow tie all of it together.

You'll also get a closer look at Bell Empire Media & Events, along with my take on gratuity—and why, these days, tipping can sometimes feel more like a solicitation than something earned through great service.

Through everything, my priorities stay the same: God first, family second, and then my community—you all.

I hope you enjoy this issue and learn a little more about me along the way.

And if you see me out and about, come say hello. I'm usually pretty easy to find.

Probably talking.

Definitely eating.

And more than likely planning something fun that I hope you'll want to be a part of.

If you're curious about what I'm cooking up next, follow along at BellEmpire.media.

Until then, I'll see you around Kemah.

Mic drop.

*Tony*Publisher, *Kemah Living*

THIS MONTH, IT'S ALL ABOUT ME

The Story Behind the Publisher of *Kemah Living*

BY TONY BELL | PHOTOS BY ADORABELLA PHOTOGRAPHY

For the first time since becoming publisher of *Kemah Living* in December 2023—and later *Neighbors of Seabrook* in September 2025—I realized I had never really taken the time to introduce myself or tell the story of how I got here.

So, this month, I thought I would.

I was born in Sacramento, California, and grew up with two sisters, each of us about a year and a half apart. Sports were a major part of my childhood, especially baseball.

My father played professional baseball, following a family tradition that went back to my great-grandfather, Herman Bell, who won the 1926 World Series with the St. Louis Cardinals. I played seriously and was groomed from an early age to continue that tradition.

Life, however, rarely follows the exact path someone else imagines for you.

My parents divorced, and during high school I attended three different schools—two in California and my final one in Las Vegas. I played baseball at all three and eventually won a Nevada state championship my senior year.

But by then, something had changed.

I still loved baseball, but I realized that playing professionally was no longer the dream I had for myself. I also had a coach who took the game far more seriously than I believed youth sports should be taken. There was a lot of yelling and pressure, and it affected my love for the game.

That experience stayed with me. It is one reason I care so much today about how we coach children. Sports should teach discipline, resilience, teamwork and confidence. They should challenge kids—but they shouldn't steal their joy.

During my senior year, I also got my first restaurant job as a busser at a steakhouse in Las Vegas. I had no idea that hospitality would become such a huge part of my life.

I worked my way through the restaurant business and eventually into fine dining. Las Vegas exposed me to some of the highest standards in hospitality, and I had the opportunity to work around names like Wolfgang Puck, Gordon Ramsay and Paul Bartolotta, while also experiencing the influence of legendary chefs like Charlie Trotter.



I was trained in environments where exceptional service wasn't an option—it was the expectation.

Hospitality taught me that the smallest details matter. It taught me to anticipate people's needs, work as a team and create an experience they remember long after they leave.

Vegas also introduced me to another passion: events.

I loved bringing people together, throwing parties, creating experiences and connecting people who otherwise might never meet. Before long, I became a promoter, and in a city where relationships matter, I seemed to know everybody.

But Vegas also has another side.

Growing up there, one of the things that kept me grounded was my faith.

My mother was my spiritual leader. She always reminded me that God would never give me more than I could handle. When life became difficult, the answer was always the same: go to church, surrender it and trust Him.



I learned to play bass guitar and began serving through music and worship at churches I attended in Las Vegas. In a city famous for temptation and excess, church gave me direction and reminded me that life needed to have a purpose beyond myself.

Then my greatest purpose arrived.

First came my son TJ, followed about a year and a half later by Dayan.

Being their father changed everything.

I coached them in sports, cooked for them, introduced them to baseball, basketball and soccer, enrolled them in jiu-jitsu and watched them grow stronger, more confident and more independent.

Eventually, though, the restaurant lifestyle started costing me something I wasn't willing to keep giving up.

Hospitality means nights, weekends and holidays. I missed too many practices, too many evenings and too many moments with my boys.

Something had to change.

Eventually, we moved to Texas.

Taking my boys out of Las Vegas and giving them the opportunity to grow up here is still one of the best decisions I believe I've made. Texas offered strong schools, competitive sports and a different environment in which to grow.

I also made a decision when I arrived: I wasn't going back into restaurants.

Vegas had given me an incredibly high standard for hospitality, service and teamwork. Rather than return to that business, I began looking for another way to use everything I had learned about people, relationships and experiences.





That eventually led me to publishing.

Today, I publish *Kemah Living* and *Neighbors of Seabrook*. Together, these magazines give me something I genuinely value: a platform to highlight families, businesses, community leaders and positive stories throughout Bay Area Houston.

They also helped create something bigger.

Through Bell Empire Media & Events, I have been able to combine media, marketing, relationships and my lifelong love of creating experiences. I'm now developing events alongside the publications, including Bourbon & Bubbles with Chef David Skinner of Eculent.

In many ways, it feels like everything has come full circle.

Hospitality taught me how to serve people. Vegas taught me how to create experiences. Sports taught me perseverance. Fatherhood taught me what really matters. Faith continues to remind me why any of it matters at all.

Today, I attend Clear Creek Community Church at the East 96 campus. I'm running two publications, building Bell Empire Media & Events, creating new experiences and, most importantly, trying to be the best father I can be.

None of it is always easy.

There are personalities, politics and disagreements that come with trying to bring people together. But I have met incredible people throughout this community on both sides of the bridge, and I believe there is far more that connects us than divides us.

That is what I want these magazines to represent.

I want to be a publisher, a connector and someone fortunate enough to have a platform that can focus on what is good in our families, businesses and communities.

At the end of the day, my priorities are simple:

Serve God first. Serve family. Then serve the community.

That's what I'm trying to do.

Thank you for reading these magazines each month, supporting the businesses that make them possible, and allowing me to be a small part of your homes and your community.

I am incredibly blessed to have two amazing sons, to call Texas home and to share a little bit of life with you every month.

I hope you enjoy the journey.

And I'll talk to you soon.






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FOIE GRAS & CAVIAR ON TOASTED BRIOCHE



BY CHEF DAVID SKINNER, ECULENT

Few combinations say indulgence quite like foie gras, caviar and brioche—and this elegant bite served at Eculent brings all three together beautifully.

WHAT ARE THEY?

FOIE GRAS is the liver of a specially fattened duck or goose, prized for its rich, buttery flavor.

CAVIAR is the salt-cured roe, or eggs, of sturgeon, ranging in flavor from delicate and buttery to briny and nutty.

BRIOCHE is a rich French bread made with butter and eggs, giving it a soft texture and slight sweetness.

INGREDIENTS

- 6 oz raw foie gras or prepared torchon
- 2 oz cream cheese, softened
- 4 slices brioche
- 1 oz caviar
- Mother-of-pearl caviar spoon

PREPARATION

If using prepared foie gras, skip the poaching step. Bring it to room temperature, then whip with the cream cheese until smooth and creamy.

If using raw foie gras, remove any veins, place it in a pot and cover with white wine. Poach at a low simmer for about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

Transfer the foie gras to a blender and blend until smooth, adding a small amount of poaching liquid as needed. Place in a mixer and gradually beat in the softened cream cheese until thick and smooth. Transfer to a piping bag fitted with a star tip.

Trim the crusts from the brioche, cut each slice diagonally into two triangles and toast at 350°F until golden.

Pipe the foie gras mixture onto each piece of brioche. Using a mother-of-pearl spoon, place a small spoonful of caviar in the center.

Serve immediately. The combination delivers a luxurious balance of creamy, savory, salty and slightly sweet flavors in every bite.

Experience this dish at Eculent in Kemah. Reservations are highly encouraged, with walk-ins available depending on the evening.

For dining hours, menus and reservations, visit [Eculent.com](https://www.eculent.com).

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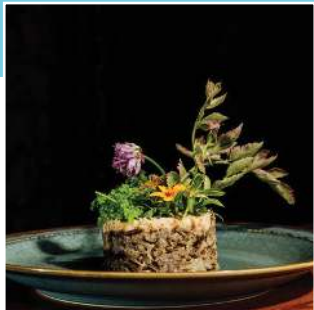
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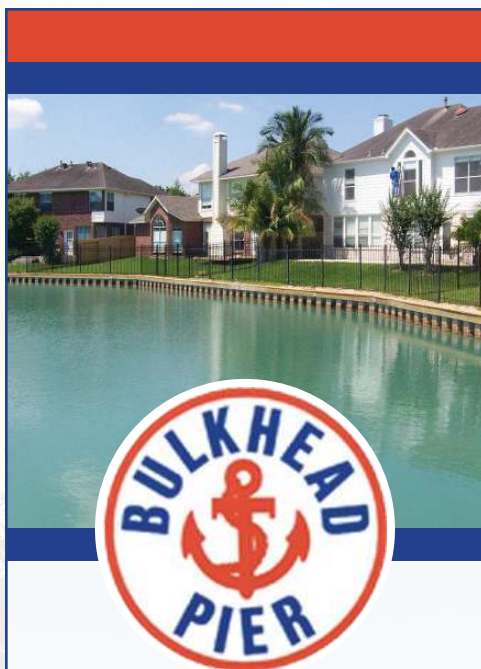


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Mayor Message

This October, we're officially declaring that Fall starts in Kemah first, especially with how much we have going on. And we're dubbing the weekend of October 9th through the 11th the official "First Weekend of Fall".

First, take a stroll through our weekly Kemah Twilight Market on Friday before catching a spooky movie under the stars at the Kemah Boardwalk.

Then, on Saturday, start your day bright and early with the Harvest & Handmade Maker's Market and stroll through our first-ever "Off The Wall" Kemah Art Walk, before heading back over to the Boardwalk for "Witches Night Out".

Cap off the weekend with a visit to the Sunday Funday market and a bite at your favorite Kemah brunch spot.

But it's not just that one weekend that's highlighted on our calendar. There's something going on all month long.

The Inspired Abilities Market and the Boardwalk's Oktoberfest are both scheduled for October 3rd, National Night Out is October 6th, Barktoberfest Kemah is October 25th, and we're also counting down to Halloween.

The Boardwalk has spooktacular events lined up every weekend in October, including Friday night movies, arts and crafts, costume contests, food challenges, and special performances.

And don't forget about this year's Trunk or Treat, Shop and Eat on October 29th. Fun for the whole family, get your fill of candy and prizes and celebrate Kemah's food scene.

Warm regards,

Robin Collins
Mayor, City of Kemah

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BIG PICTURE
pediatric dentistry



5 THINGS I LOOK FOR AT YOUR CHILD'S DENTAL VISIT BESIDES CAVITIES



BY DR. JASON BROCK, BOARD CERTIFIED PEDIATRIC DENTIST AT BIG PICTURE PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

When most parents think about a dental visit, they picture a cleaning, X-rays, and checking for cavities. But there is much more happening during a pediatric dental visit. Because children's mouths, jaws, and faces are constantly developing, I'm looking at many things that can tell me how a child is growing and where they may need support along the way.

• **HOW THE BITE IS DEVELOPING**

I look at how the upper and lower teeth come together and watch for crowding, crossbites, or other developing concerns. Catching certain issues early can sometimes allow for simpler intervention as a child grows.

• **HOW TEETH ARE COMING IN**

The timing and position of erupting teeth can provide important clues about development. I monitor spacing, delayed eruption, missing teeth, and other variations to determine what is normal for that child and what may deserve a closer look.

• **ORAL HABITS**

Thumb or finger sucking, pacifier use, and tongue positioning can all influence developing teeth and jaws. My goal isn't to make parents worry about every childhood habit, but to help families understand when a habit may begin affecting development.

• **SIGNS OF GRINDING OR AIRWAY CONCERNS**

Worn teeth, jaw discomfort, mouth breathing, snoring, or sleeping with the mouth open can sometimes provide clues worth discussing. These signs don't necessarily mean something is wrong, but they may prompt me to look more closely or recommend additional evaluation.

• **THE DEVELOPING ADULT TEETH**

Even before permanent teeth appear, they are developing beneath the gums. I monitor their progress and look for anything unusual that may affect how they eventually emerge.

One of my favorite parts of pediatric dentistry is watching children grow. A dental visit gives me more than a snapshot of their teeth – it gives me an opportunity to look at the bigger picture of a child's growth and development.

That's why I believe consistency matters. When I get to know a child and their family over time, I can recognize changes, celebrate progress, and address concerns when they are easiest to manage. Pediatric dentistry isn't just about treating teeth; it's about building a relationship that supports a child's healthy, confident smile as they grow.



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MY FAVORITE ATHLETES
IN THE WORLD:

TJ & Dayan



BY TONY BELL

Sports have always been a big part of the Bell family. My great-grandfather, Herman Bell, was a professional baseball player who won the 1926 World Series with the St. Louis Cardinals and later led the National League in saves in 1930. So when I became a father, I couldn't wait to introduce my sons, TJ and Dayan, to sports.

I started by coaching both of them in baseball. For several years, we spent countless hours at the ballpark and won several Little League championships together. At the time, I thought baseball would become our family's main sport.

TJ and Dayan had other plans.

TJ began gravitating toward soccer and later basketball. Around second and third grade, both boys also began training in jiu-jitsu while we lived in Las Vegas. They practiced for years, competed in tournaments, won medals and eventually earned their gray belts.

When we moved to Texas, sports became even more competitive, and swimming entered the picture. Both boys joined the Seabrook Stingrays, and at just eight

years old, Dayan won a gold medal in the backstroke at the championship meet.

Today, TJ plays soccer for the Bayside Intermediate team, and I still have the privilege of coaching him in basketball. Dayan continues to excel in the pool as a high-level swimmer with the League City Sharks. Watching them find their own sports and develop their own strengths has been one of the greatest joys of being their dad.

They will always be my favorite athletes—not because of championships, medals or wins, but because I've watched them struggle, improve, compete and keep trying when something was difficult.

My dad once told me, "Son, you have to practice. You can't just depend on your talent." He also taught me two lessons I've never forgotten: "The worst thing in life is wasted talent," and, "If it was easy, anyone could do it."

I hope one day TJ and Dayan pass those same lessons on to their own children, because sports teach discipline, perseverance and character—lessons that are an important part of becoming a man.



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You Lost the Weight. Now Let's Talk About the Skin.



Why ILLaser 1940 is Changing the Conversation at Glow Up



BY MARISSA GARCIA, BSN, RN

If there's one thing I've learned after years in health, wellness, and aesthetics, it's that the newest treatment isn't always the best treatment. I'm picky about the technology I bring into Glow Up, and I want to know exactly where it fits into a client's overall treatment plan.

ILLaser 1940 is one I'm incredibly excited about.

The Weight Came Off. The Loose Skin Didn't.

Medical weight loss has changed the game. We're seeing clients lose significant amounts of weight and feel better than they have in years.

But sometimes the fat leaves and the skin doesn't exactly get the memo.

Loose abdominal skin. Crepey arms. Laxity around the thighs and knees. And facial volume loss and skin laxity that can contribute to the appearance commonly called "Ozempic face."

Losing the weight is an incredible accomplishment. You shouldn't finally hit your goal and then feel like loose skin is the next thing you have to hide.

That's where ILLaser 1940 gets exciting.

The 1940 nm wavelength interacts with water within the tissue, allowing us to deliver controlled energy where we want it. This can support collagen remodeling and improve the appearance of lax, aging skin.

And my favorite part? We aren't limited to the face.

Depending on the client and treatment plan, we can address areas

including the face, jawline, neck, arms, abdomen, bra area, thighs, knees, and other areas of the body where skin laxity is a concern.

Why I Brought It to Glow Up

There are plenty of expensive machines in aesthetics with really pretty marketing behind them. That doesn't impress me.

I care about what a technology can actually do, who is an appropriate candidate, and how I can use it as part of an individualized treatment plan.

Sometimes that means injectables. Sometimes collagen stimulation. Sometimes energy-based tightening. And sometimes the best result comes from strategically combining treatments.

That's the difference between selling a procedure and actually treating the person in front of you.

Glow Up Is Growing — With a Purpose

I'm also excited to announce our new Clear Lake procedural office, created specifically to expand the advanced procedures we're able to offer our clients.

This will be the home of our ILLaser procedures, giving us a dedicated space for these more advanced treatments while continuing to serve our Seabrook, Kemah, Clear Lake, League City, and surrounding Bay Area communities.

If you've lost the weight but aren't loving what it left behind—or you're simply ready to address aging, lax skin—come see us.

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Gratuity Gone Wild

How We Lost Sight of Real Service



BY TONY BELL

When someone goes out to eat, the experience is judged on three core factors: the quality of the food, the atmosphere of the restaurant, and the level of service provided. When all three work together, dining out feels worth the time and money. But when even one of those elements fails—especially service—the entire experience can be ruined.

The reason I'm bringing this up is that I've spent over 20 years at the highest level of hospitality in Las Vegas, working with chefs like Wolfgang Puck, Gordon Ramsay, Paul Bar-

tolotta, and Charlie Trotter. I've been trained in Forbes, Michelin, and James Beard standards. In other words, I know firsthand what it means to truly earn a gratuity through genuine hospitality and skillful service.

Today, we live in a world where gratuity has become less about earning and more about obligation. Instead of tipping being a reflection of great service, customers are increasingly pressured into tipping before service even happens. Drive-thrus, coffee shops, and fast-casual counters now flip a screen around with preset tip percentages,

subtly shaming customers into paying more regardless of the experience. This isn't hospitality—it's solicitation.

Tipping was never meant to be automatic. It was designed to reward effort, attentiveness, and genuine care. Yet somewhere along the way, expectations shifted. Subpar service has become normalized, while a 20 percent tip is treated as mandatory. The problem isn't that customers don't value service—the problem is that service standards have declined while tip expectations have increased.

October 3rd

Inspired Abilities Market Kemah

608 Bradford Ave

Time: 12-5 pm

Cost: Free

Inspired Abilities Market is an inclusive community market celebrating talented makers, artists, and entrepreneurs of all abilities.

<https://www.facebook.com/KTXEvents>

October 6th

National Night Out

City Parking Lot

Time: 6-9pm

Cost: Free

An annual event that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie.

<https://discoverkemah.com/>

October 7th

Homeschool Day

Kemah Boardwalk

Time: 1-4pm

Cost: Free/Varies

Join us with your family and experience a day of educational thrills!

<https://www.kemahboardwalk.com/homeschool-day>

October 10th

Harvest & Handmade Maker's Market

608 Bradford Ave

Time: 10 am -2 pm

Cost: Free

A fun maker's market on the green space on Bradford Ave between 6th St & 7th St. The 2nd & 4th Saturday monthly.

<https://www.facebook.com/KTXEvents>

OCTOBER 2026

October 10th

"Off The Wall" Kemah Art Walk

Jimmy Walker Community Center

800 Harris Ave

Time: 4-8pm

Cost: Free

Enjoy an evening art walk while sipping on complimentary beer/wine and taking in the beauty around you.

<https://www.facebook.com/DiscoverKemah/events>

October 11th

Kemah Sunday Funday Market

608 Bradford Ave

Time: 11 am -4 pm

Cost: Free

A fun market on the green space on Bradford Ave between 6th St & 7th St. The 2nd Sunday monthly.

<https://www.facebook.com/KTXEvents>

October 17th

Barktoberfest

Galveston Bay Brewing

902 Marina Bay Dr.

Time: 11 am-3 pm

Cost: Free

Vendors, beer, food, silent auction, raffle, costume contest, microchips, and live music all benefitting Bay Area Pet Adoptions.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1732703407875699>

October 22nd-24th

39th Harvest Moon Regatta

Lakewood Yacht Club

Time: HMR Race Start 2 pm

Cost: Varies

Lakewood Yacht Club is honored to present their 38th Annual Race to Port Aransas.

<https://www.harvestmoonregatta.com>

October 29th

Trunk or Treat, Shop and Eat

608 Bradford Ave

Time: 5-8pm

Cost: Free

Join us for trunk or treating, shopping, and delicious food from some of Kemah's most delicious restaurants.

www.kemahtrunkortreat.com

October 30th

Music in the Historic District

League Park

512 2nd St, League City

Time: 7pm-10pm

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<https://www.facebook.com/LeagueCityFolkAssociation/events>

BUILDING THE BELL EMPIRE



BY TONY BELL
Bell Empire Media & Events was founded in 2022 as a way to bring everything I do under one roof.

The name itself has always meant something deeper to me. My goal was to build something that could eventually be passed down to my sons—an empire a king could one day hand down to his two princes.

Today, Bell Empire has two primary branches: media and events.

The media side includes *Kemah Living* and *Neighbors of Seabrook*, reaching approximately 7,500 homes throughout the Bay Area Houston community. Through those publications and our marketing services, we help local businesses grow through multi-channel marketing that includes print, digital advertising, SEO and website development.

But over time, another opportunity became impossible to ignore: events.

I've always had a passion for creating experiences that people remember. After years of throwing parties and events in Las Vegas, I knew that same energy could be brought to the Bay Area.

It started small with business networking events at Kemah Gardens and later a business and food expo. Then, last year, the City of Kemah asked me to help with its Trunk-or-Treat. I invited local restaurants, added food to the experience and helped transform it into a Trunk-or-Treat & Eat that drew roughly 2,000 to 3,000 people.

This year, it returns as **Trunk-or-Treat Shop & Eat** in the Lighthouse District parking area, bringing together local businesses, restaurants and families for an even bigger community experience.

Bell Empire is also launching **Bourbon & Bubbles**, an intimate, invitation-only, dress-to-impress culinary experience at Eculent that will take place quarterly—bringing a little taste of Vegas to the Bay Area.

These events represent the next chapter for Bell Empire: combining the reach of media and marketing with the power of bringing people together in person.

Bell Empire Media & Events continues to grow, but the mission remains simple: help businesses connect, create memorable experiences and build something worth passing down.

Learn more at **BellEmpire.media**, **KemahTrunkorTreat.com** and **BourbonAndBubblesTX.com**.

I look forward to seeing you there.





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From Concert Tees to Fine Art: Why Chuck Sperry Is My Favorite Artist

BY TONY BELL

I've always been an avid concertgoer, and when I lived in Las Vegas, there was never a shortage of incredible bands rolling through town. For years, part of the ritual was buying a concert T-shirt—something tangible I could take home to remember the night. Somewhere around shirt number 60, though, I realized I needed a new souvenir.

In the summer of 2018, I noticed a concert poster at a merch stand, and it completely changed the way I looked at concert memorabilia. The artwork was by Chuck Sperry: a striking female figure surrounded by intricate floral patterns, layered colors and the kind of detail that makes you stop and stare.

I had to have it.

That purchase sent me down the rabbit hole.

I began collecting posters from shows I attended, then from concerts and artists around the country—and occasionally around the world. Along the way, I discovered artists I still love, including NC Winters, Dane Henry Jr., Todd Slater, Luke Martin, James Flames and Emek. At one point, my collection grew to more than 200 posters.

But Sperry has always remained my favorite.

A San Francisco-based artist and screen printer, Sperry has created rock posters for decades, including work for Bill Graham Presents and Goldenvoice. His work has

also crossed into the fine-art world, appearing in galleries and museum collections. Many of his best-known works feature female figures, floral ornamentation and mythological muses, all rendered in his unmistakable psychedelic style.

Eventually, I decided artwork this beautiful shouldn't spend its life hidden in a portfolio or flat file. I began framing my favorites and putting them where they belonged—on the walls.

Today, I still keep roughly 100 posters, but the ones that earn wall space are the special ones. And more often than not, those are Chuck Sperrys.

I'll probably always collect his work. Yes, the subject matter is easy on the eyes—but every piece also feels alive and instantly recognizable. I'm fortunate to own the pieces pictured here, and happy to share one of my favorite hobbies and the artist who helped start it all.

Learn more at ChuckSperry.net.



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