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# New Mexico

MAGAZINE

MARCH 2016

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SALAD QUEEN ERIN WADE

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# New Mexico

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# New Mexico

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10 REASONS TO LOVE ANGEL FIRE





Hiroshi "Hershey" Miyamura is revered in his hometown for Korean War heroics. *Facing page:* He displays the Medal of Honor that President Eisenhower gave him in 1953.



# People **POWER**

BY DAVID PIKE PHOTOS BY JEN JUDGE

**GALLUP** comes together through artists, war heroes, outdoor enthusiasts, and one mighty ceremonial.

**T**here's a reason the Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial—a five-day celebration of parades, rodeos, performances, and powwows honoring the heritage and soul of northwestern New Mexico—is held in Gallup. The city is a commercial and cultural center of Native America. Its distinctive blend of art, culture, history, and tradition, plus the ceremonial, have drawn people from around the globe for a century.

The city borders the eastern third of the 27,000-square-mile territory that is the Navajo Nation, and sits a short distance from Zuni, Acoma, and Laguna Pueblos, as well as the Hopi tribe in northeastern Arizona. Silver belt buckles and bolo ties dominate. The blue city flag is emblazoned with a thunderbird, and the local radio station KGAK advertises, "All Navajo, all the time." Tradingpost signs boast "museum quality" and "authentic." Shelves overflow with Native pottery, rugs, paintings, and leatherwork.

Almost half of Gallup's more than 21,000 residents are Native American. Many others are descendants of immigrants who came from across Europe, especially the Slavic countries, to work in coal-mining camps in the 19th century. It's a place of war heroes and patriots. It's a transportation crossroads: a railroad town since the 1880s, surrounded by an interstate, with a segment of old Route 66 anchoring its main street.

With a mix like that, the Inter-Tribal Ceremonial couldn't possibly happen anywhere else.

The best way to get to know Gallup is by getting to know some of the people who make this city what it is. Look for these folks and others when you're at Inter-Tribal—or whenever you visit.

#### **BOOSTER: KEN RIEGE**

Over lunch at the downtown Eagle Diner, against a soundtrack of country music on the radio and the rumble of BNSF trains passing on the nearby tracks, Ken Riege tells me of the first time he saw Gallup. It was 1994, and he and his wife, Retha, whom he had met while stationed at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, had decided to move here and raise their family—one boy and another on the way.

Ken's wife had grown up in Gallup. But he had never even seen the town. No bother—they clicked. Upon first driving into town, Ken said, "I'm home."

Later, he would give his new home a special distinction. In 2013, he heard that Rand McNally, the prominent mapmaking company, was hosting a competition to award small towns in America certain designations, like "Most Fun" or "Most Beautiful." He set his sights on "Most Patriotic."

It was not an arbitrary choice. His Air Force duty lasted from 1985 to 1993, and he feels a responsibility to the country and a call to honor the men and women who have served. As manager of the Comfort Suites in Gallup, he has turned the hotel lobby into a mini-museum of military history. In the breakfast nook, one table and chair have been left empty as a "remembrance table," symbolically set to honor service members missing in action. A memorial by the front door features dog tags upon which hotel guests have written the names of veterans they want to honor.

For three months, Ken and supporters in the city and at the capitol in Santa Fe worked on the nomination, drumming up votes, drafting the application essay, even filming a supporting video. They stressed the city's deep, meaningful, and demonstrable claim to the title. The Veterans Memorial Park at the courthouse showcases, on elegant pillars, the names of Gallup citizens killed in action. The Navajo Code Talkers, whose messages ensured successful wartime communications during World War II, left a legacy of military heroism. But, as Ken tells me, the true patriotism of this city is most evident in the very way of life that brings together people and cultures to strengthen both.

"We look out for one another here," Ken says. "We are patriots by enjoying the freedoms we have."

If you look at the WELCOME TO GALLUP sign as you drive into town from the east, you'll learn how the contest turned out. Or check the banner across the front of Sammy C's Rock n' Sports Pub & Grille downtown. Or even the letterhead for the City of Gallup itself.

Rand McNally's decision, Ken tells me, was unanimous. Best of all, the contest has since been discontinued, meaning that Gallup will retain the title of "Most Patriotic Small Town in America" in perpetuity.

#### **KEEPER OF THE FLAME: ZONNIE GORMAN**

As a girl growing up on the Navajo reservation, Zonnie Gorman often traveled to meetings, parades, and celebrations with her father. An outgoing man with a dry sense of humor, whose warmth, intelligence, and charisma made him effective in both the Navajo and Anglo worlds, he was sought after as a speaker, artist, educator, and historian. She knew her father was important, but her understanding of why came gradually.

"It was this slow-dawning realization of who my dad was," she recalls.

In May 1942, the U.S. Marines were recruiting residents of the Navajo Nation for a test using the Diné



Hotelier Ken Riege fell in love with Gallup, his wife's hometown, and helped it win a national honor for patriotism.



Zonnie Gorman stands by a statue honoring the Navajo Code Talkers. Her father, Carl (C. N.) Gorman, was one of the first Code Talkers. She has devoted herself to researching their history and keeping their story alive.

language to transfer coded wartime messages. Carl (C.N.) Gorman, Zonnie's father, then working as a translator for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was playing cards with friends when he heard about it. He promptly volunteered, becoming one of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers. Many of the men in that first group were recruited from the Native American boarding school at Fort Wingate, just a few miles away from Gallup. All were sworn in there.

Their code-talking efforts proved so successful that several hundred others were soon recruited and trained.

In her home, Zonnie shows me the research she's conducted on the Code Talkers, which she shares around the country in lectures and which will also form the basis of her doctoral dissertation from the University of New Mexico. One room is dedicated to storing photos, papers, military records, and oral histories. Along the way, Zonnie has become one of the more prominent experts on the Code Talkers. She works hard to reveal their histories, uncover their lives, and keep their stories alive—and to ensure that they are not forgotten.

"I feel an obligation to these men," she says.

After returning from the war, C.N. Gorman took advantage of the GI Bill to study art. Later, he became a prominent educator and one of the founding faculty members of the Native American studies program at the University of California, Davis, where the C. N. Gorman Museum, created in 1973, specializes in Native American art. R. C. Gorman, his son and Zonnie's brother, rose to the heights of the art world before his death in 2005.

In her home, Zonnie treats me to a curated exhibit of her father's creations, like the small, blue-speckled plate with curved figures inspired by cliff dwellings at Three Turkey Ruin in Arizona's Canyon de Chelly. Another is adorned with the figures of three men riding horses (horses, she says, were her father's favorite subject). And then, my favorite: A larger painting of six horses sprinting across a dark blue background, their blue and brown figures blending in a way that seems almost dreamlike.

That afternoon, I attend a lecture, "Growing Up with Heroes," that Zonnie gives to members of the military visiting Gallup. Throughout, she shows photos of the Code Talkers. In many of them, she points to one figure in the group. "That," she says, "is my father."

#### WAR HERO: HIROSHI "HERSHEY" MIYAMURA

Everyone's told me that Hershey Miyamura is a humble man. I don't realize just how humble until Ken

Riege and I visit him in the house he bought with his wife shortly after returning from the Korean War. Hershey—his fourth-grade teacher in Gallup gave him the nickname when she couldn't pronounce "Hiroshi"—looks on as Ken pulls up a video on his phone of a younger Hershey receiving the Medal of Honor from President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the White House on October 27, 1953.

Hershey has never seen the video before—was unaware, in fact, that it even existed. Sitting next to me with the phone in his hands, he sees for the first time a historic moment from his past, a moment of national significance, one for which a degree of self-pride would certainly be warranted. Incredibly, Hershey hands the phone to me because he's worried I'm not able to see the video clearly.

On April 24, 1951, on a hill near Taejon-ni, Korea, Hershey used his bayonet to forestall an assault by Communist Chinese soldiers, giving the men in the machine-gun squad he commanded cover to withdraw. Corporal Miyamura made his own escape, but was captured the next day. With several other American soldiers, he began a harrowing forced march that lasted five weeks and covered 300 miles to an enemy POW camp. There, for almost two years, they suffered disease, fatigue, propaganda campaigns, and bitter cold in the winter months. Many prisoners perished. The bug-infested rations were barely enough to keep the remaining men from starving. To stay sane, they traded stories about the recipes they would cook when they returned home.

As the war came to a close and the POWs were returned to the American camp, Hershey was told that his valiant efforts on the mountain that April night had earned him the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor.

"I couldn't believe it," he recalls of being told the news. "I was just doing my job."

He brings the medal out for me to see: a light blue ribbon, a gold star, the word VALOR, and an eagle. It is as refined and subdued, I think, as the man showing it to me.

The city of Gallup has since made Hershey a hometown hero, naming a street, a school, and a park in his honor. Hershey has used the opportunity to talk with groups about his personal philosophy, developed in part through his ordeal.

"You don't give up," he says. "It's so easy to give up, but you can't. Events are going to happen in your life, and you don't know why they happen, but usually somewhere in your life you find that it was for the best." >>

#### DIRECTOR OF THE DANCES: TERI FRAIZER

Teri Fraizer stands on the plaza in front of the McKinley County Courthouse, which might be the only courthouse in the country with a plaza specifically designed for dancing. Every evening between Memorial Day and Labor Day, this downtown block pulses with the pounding of drums and the rhythmic display of Native American dancers moving in time. Teri, who's from Laguna Pueblo, is in charge of organizing Gallup's Nightly Indian Dances, all of them free and open to the public.

As the sun hides behind a giant blue cloud overhead, she points out the pattern on the plaza before me: earth-colored stone blocks arranged in a circular shape around an interior "bowl" filled with small pebbles and river dirt. The pebbles in the bowl—which is also the dancing area—allow rainwater to drain, Teri tells me, keeping the surface dry so a rainy night won't spoil the fun. Then, correctly sensing that I'm missing what's right in front of me, Teri smiles and lets me in on the bigger picture: Seen from above, the blocks on the plaza form the shape of a Navajo basket.

Teri's role as director of the dances comes on top of her full-time work as chief communications officer for Gallup-McKinley County Schools. For her, education matters both in the classroom and on the plaza. Most nights, the dancers or emcees explain the significance of a dance or of the items used in a dancer's clothing. Teri also recruits locals to serve as "ambassadors," manning tables near the steps of the courthouse and answering questions about the dances, Native Americans, Gallup, and New Mexico. In this way, the dances strike a balance between tradition and performance.

"The dances are an educational, cultural, interactive place to be," Teri says. "Not just a show."

Some 240 people come every night, both tourists and locals, though locals tend to park their cars along the side of the parking lot and watch from within, honking their approval instead of clapping. They get to see groups like the Cellicion Traditional Dancers of Zuni Pueblo, or dancers from San Juan, Laguna, and Acoma Pueblos, and even Navajo and Apache dance groups, many of them known worldwide. This summer, four "Gourd Dances," traditionally reserved for warriors, will be incorporated to honor Gallup's being named the "Most Patriotic Small Town in America."

The payoff for all these efforts is a wonderful night of cultural connection and, for some audience members, an experience to be remembered forever. Sometimes, visitors are invited into the dance area, hands are joined, and everyone moves in a circle together. It's called a Friendship Dance.

#### ADVENTURER: BOB ROSEBROUGH

You're most likely to meet Bob Rosebrough on a hiking trail or bike path. The real Bob Rosebrough, that is. Not the fictional one in the novel *The Fallen Man*, by Tony Hillerman, who daringly descends a rope ladder suspended from a helicopter to the peak of Ship Rock, in northwestern New Mexico, and finds a clue that helps solve the mystery. The latter is based on the former. Hillerman was so impressed with Rosebrough's mountaineering knowledge—and his willingness to share it so that technical details in the novel would be correct—that he made him a character, by name, in his book.

Rosebrough (the real one, whom I meet in his downtown law office) is one of the individuals behind the rise of Gallup as a destination for mountain bikers and outdoor enthusiasts. He speaks with the calm confidence of someone who hangs off the sides of mountains as a hobby.

"Everything you'd go elsewhere for, we've got here in Gallup," he says. "We've got remarkable outdoor settings. We've got the forest up in the Zuni Mountains. We've got the Red Rocks and the fantastic high desert of the Colorado Plateau around us."

With his friend Peter Tempest, Bob wrote the book *The Gallup Guide* to highlight these opportunities. Soon after, they started developing recreational areas and trails in the hills and mountains around town. Like the Zuni Mountain Trail System, developed in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service, to guide hikers and cyclists through ponderosa pines in the mountains south of town.

When work on these projects began to stall, around 2002, Bob did what any true enthusiast would do: He ran for mayor.

Among the accomplishments of his 2003–2007 tenure were the construction of a 100-acre shooting range, the purchase of a 40-acre rock-climbing area west of town (known today as the Mentmore Climbing Area), and the completion of the High Desert Trail System, a hiking and mountain-biking trail that crosses the high desert on land once owned by coal-mining companies. Since then, Bob has helped form the Adventure Gallup and Beyond organization to advocate for Gallup as a destination for travelers. Their work appears to be paying off. In 2013 and 2014, Gallup hosted the 24-Hour Mountain Bike National Championships, an endurance race that attracts some of the best riders in the nation.

"No matter what it is, whether it's mountain biking, hiking, or rock climbing," he says, "it's hard to beat what we've got here." >>



**Facing page, from top: Teri Fraizer organizes Gallup's Nightly Indian Dances, an opportunity for visitors to appreciate Native culture—and sometimes to dance themselves. Bob Rosebrough has helped Gallup expand its recreational assets, including miles of bike trails.**



# ERIN WADE'S SALAD DAYS

The stylish NM-based restaurateur has branched into retail and exported her brand to Austin. Is this only the beginning?

BY JOHN MULLER PHOTOS BY JEN JUDGE

Wade at Modern General, her newish Santa Fe shop/café. Facing page: The Nutty Pear-fessor salad is served at Vinaigrette, her restaurant next door. It's made with grilled Bosc pears, bacon crumbles, toasted pecan halves, and tangy Maytag blue cheese, served with tender greens and ruby port vinaigrette.



**ERIN WADE DOESN'T DO GREEN CHILE.** This tends to raise eyebrows for a couple of reasons. First, because as a restaurateur she's built a budding empire out of the way we eat, or wish we ate, in 2016: If it's green, organic, and locally grown, you'll likely find it in her kitchens. At salad-centric Vinaigrette, which just opened a third location in Austin after building a devoted following in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, you can gobble up a garden's worth of kale, cabbage, or peppers of the bell variety, yet there's nary a Big Jim in sight.

Next door to the original Santa Fe Vinny, at Wade's new restaurant/retail mashup Modern General, I'm savoring the flecks of fresh mint in my fruit salad and straining to hear over the whine of leafy greens getting mulched into smoothies as Wade reveals reason number two you might expect her menus to have a little more regional kick. True, she

wasn't born here all her life, as the saying goes. And her vintage tweed Yves Saint Laurent jacket would look more familiar in New York or Milan, both of which she's called home. But New Mexico has been more than incidental to Wade's success.

"Oh, my gosh," she says, flashing a smile that recalls the young Julia Roberts. "I moved to the desert to figure out what I wanted to do with my life."

Wade, 35, grew up in Bellingham, Washington, with Oklahoman parents who'd been "spat out" by their home state. Her mom was an avid environmentalist who encouraged her to read the writer and agricultural activist Wendell Berry when she wasn't running around in the woods. After high school, Wade attended Harvard, where she studied environmental science and public policy with plans to go on to med school, then abruptly changed course and wound up an English major. Her ambition barely

skipped a beat. She landed a job at *Harper's Bazaar* out of college. That led to a year studying fashion design in Milan. But the work wasn't fulfilling, and urban life gave her "a physical reaction that your cells have when you're out of your element."

Not knowing what else to do, she retreated to a 300-year-old farmhouse her family had purchased in Nambé. "I knew I wanted to get a dog and move to the country," she says. She holed up with a stack of books on organic farming, a subject she knew nothing about, though her science background helped with the nuanced "agro-ecological" thinking required to produce a good crop without chemical fixes. It took years of experimenting to adapt the advice of authors like the New Englander Eliot Coleman to the arid New Mexico climate. "Even my neighbor's farm might be different than mine," she explains. "We all have to find our own style."

Style is one thing Wade's not short on. The table next to ours at Modern General is a weathered stump that adds a nice rustic touch to the high-ceilinged, vaguely Scandinavian room. Wade's red wellies, which she wore to town from the farm this drizzly morning, look coordinated with the retail display behind her head, where Carl Jung's *Red Book* is improbably paired with an arrangement of binder clips in a matching hue. "Nothing you don't need" is the store's motto, though a more accurate one might be: Nothing that would look out of place in an *au courant* gardening-food-lifestyle magazine called *Modern General*. Taste is important to Wade's businesses in more ways than one.

Her transformation from novice agriculturalist to Martha Stewart for the new millennium began, to her dismay, in a repurposed taco truck. At 25, with a

*From facing page: The interior of Vinaigrette in Santa Fe. Wade making kolaches from her grandmother's recipe. Frisée, lettuce, chard, and kale, a few of the many greens used in the salads at Vinaigrette.*

couple of harvests under her belt, Wade started dreaming of a restaurant based on the salads she'd been creating on the farm. Again she hit the books, this time teaching herself to write a business plan, but she found investors reluctant to bite on a would-be restaurateur with no experience in the industry. So she fixed up an old food truck and set about proving to everyone—herself included—that Santa Fe's taste for wellness could hold its own against the city's appetite for enchiladas.

In 2008, Vinaigrette found its first permanent home a few blocks southwest of the Roundhouse. The restaurant learning curve was steep, but by 2012 Wade was ready to expand to Albuquerque, where Vinny number two opened just west of Downtown, on Central Avenue. The culinary counterprogramming turned out to be a surprisingly easy sell. Wade's fresh aesthetic didn't hurt, either. Customers flocked to eat seasonal, organic salads in a place where drinks were served in mason jars but the décor was modern, all blond wood and polished metal, for an experience that was somehow hip and homey at once. In warm weather, diners spilled out onto the Albuquerque restaurant's ample patio, while Santa Fe swelled with tourists who pleaded with Wade to bring a Vinaigrette to their hometown. One name she heard with increasing frequency was Austin.

With the opening of the first Vinaigrette in Texas this winter, Wade's cultural exportation program has begun in earnest. "Austin's an awesome city, but it's very aware of it right now. No one thinks that cool stuff is happening outside of certain hubs in America. And I'm like, there are really smart, incredible people in New Mexico," she says. Her staff bring the state's ideas and talent with them—but not the one ingredient customers come looking for when they find out where the restaurant was born.

So why no green chile? Wade shrugs. "It's almost a cliché," she says. Delicious, sure, but it's everyone's style, not her own. It's the same reason she'd rather try out new business ideas than push for some national mega-chain. "I don't want a bajillion Vinnies. I'm not willing to sand off all the rough edges," she says.

In a corner of Modern General, an employee is cranking a flour mill by hand. One by one, people come in from the cold to start their day the way Wade has envisioned it, with a light, nutritious breakfast and some craic at the long community table. As she's speaking, the clouds part a bit and suddenly the room is flooded with light, the way it was designed to be. Wade breaks into her luminous smile. It'll be a sunny drive back out to the farm. ■

Contributor John Muller is a writer-in-residence at El Zaguán, in Santa Fe.

FIND SOME OF WADE'S RECIPES ON P. 50

## MADE BY WADE

### VINAIGRETTE

Albuquerque: 1828 Central Ave. SW; (505) 842-5507

Santa Fe: 709 Don Cubero Alley; (505) 820-9205

vinaigretteonline.com

### MODERN GENERAL

637 Cerrillos Rd., Santa Fe; (505) 930-5462

moderngeneralnm.com

The upbeat décor of Vinaigrette on Central Avenue in Albuquerque.

