

Sunshine **ARTIST**

SEPTEMBER 2013

Your 21st annual
200 Best Shows



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Rio Grande Arts & Crafts Festival Balloon Fiesta Show

Albuquerque, New Mexico; October.

Produced by Ruth Gore.



New Mexico continues to be dominated by Ruth Gore's Rio Grande Arts & Crafts Festivals, as all three again placed — and served as that state's only representatives — on the *200 Best*. Furthermore, the Balloon Fiesta Show earned its highest ranking yet by landing in the top 10, while the Spring Show rocketed up to #58 and the Holiday Show took a slight dip to #78.

Part of this edition's appeal stems from its concurrent timing with the world-famous Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. Approximately 2 million spectators come out for the launch of more than 1,000 hot air balloons, and tens of thousands of those sightseers visit the art show beneath its gigantic white tent. Accordingly, Rio Grande's back-to-back weekends can be earnings bonanzas for the 225 exhibitors. Per SA reporter David Schneider, "Many artists count on this show to be their best of the year, and it usually is."

In 2012, all voters cleared at least \$2,000, most hit the \$5,000-\$10,000 range and one went over five figures. With numbers like these, rabid affection for this show makes perfect sense!

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Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival

Winter Park, Florida; March.

Produced by Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival.



The Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival is a perennial Central Florida favorite, with 100,000 people flocking to its posh namesake city every year to view and buy work from some of the nation's greatest artists. Shooting up 11 spots from last year's list, the show has now reclaimed a berth in the top 10, making it the state's highest-ranked event and cementing its reputation as the area's best.

Regarding revenue, while no one who voted for the show reported sales in excess of \$10,000, they all took in at least \$5,000 for the weekend. Plus, the \$72,500 in available award money, which includes \$15,000 in purchase awards, can make this the most profitable weekend of the year for winning artists.

Another hallmark of this festival is its exceptionally high-quality work due to the exacting standards set forth by its organizers. While those strict expectations make jurying in particularly difficult, the end result is a show that's chock full of truly amazing art — and a management team known for going above and beyond for the 225 selected artists.