



NEW MEXICO

► **October 3-5 & 10-12, Rio Grande Arts & Crafts Festival – Balloon Fiesta Show, Albuquerque.**
 Contact: Ruth Gore, 3709 Westerfield Drive NE, Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87111. Phone: 505-292-7457. Fax: 505-293-1153. Email: info@riograndefestivals.com. Website: www.riograndefestivals.com. Application fee: \$30. Space fee: \$450-\$900. Space size: 10x10 to 10x20. 80% indoors/20% outdoors. Exhibitors: 225 (per weekend). Attendance: 80,000 (source: gate receipts). Admission: 47.

Compiled from *FastAudit* reports

Editor's note: Our December 2014 issue included State Reporters Jim Carnevale and David Schneider's assessments of this event. The following review offers another perspective based on FastAudit submissions.

Moving is never easy, particularly when it comes to a nationally known arts & crafts festival. Throw in the fact that the Rio Grande Arts & Crafts Festival – Balloon Fiesta Show had a long history of profitability at its former home, (It was the #8 fine art show on 2014's *200 Best*.) and you considerably ramp up the difficulty.

Nevertheless, as evidenced by State Reporters Jim Carnevale and David Schneider's findings in our December 2014 issue, as well as the opinion of most auditors, promoter

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Ruth Gore and her team apparently did an admirable job of making it happen in time for the event's 26th annual edition. As a photographer with \$5,500 total from an average item price (AIP) of \$400 total put it: "This is a great show. It will overcome the move to its new location."

Management (9.7 overall average score on a 10-point scale) was also this event's highest-rated component, and artist treatment

(9.5) and artist amenities (8.6) did fine, too. "Always a class-act show [that's] well promoted," said a jeweler (\$3,000 total/\$52 AIP), "especially with the location change."

How were sales (6.8) for the rest of the auditors? Largely decent, especially in light of the move. However, only the wood & stone artisan indicated whether they had done both weekends or just one. Other exhibitors who shared sales

data included: a clay artisan (\$5,300 total/\$45 AIP), a wood & stone artisan (\$5,000 total/\$125 AIP), a fiber artisan (\$5,000 total/\$45 AIP), a woodworker (\$3,200 total/unknown AIP), a printmaker (\$2,839 total/\$150 AIP), a second jeweler (\$1,700 total/\$30 AIP), a third jeweler (\$1,600 total/\$100 AIP), a 3-D mixed media artist (\$1,000 total/\$150 AIP) and a second woodworker (\$720 total/\$100 AIP). Additionally, a second clay artisan shared an AIP of \$65.

Comments on revenue were understandably varied. For example, the wood & stone artisan called it "our best show of the year..." and the clay artisan with \$5,300 total said "...sales were fine." Conversely, the low-selling woodworker won't be back because of "low sales," and the low-selling jeweler opined, "My impression was that contemporary work does not sell well at this show." In the middle was the 3-D mixed media artist, who said: "I think sales were down for most artists because of the change in venue. I'd like to participate again and have more lower-priced items available."

No one took a dimmer view of the proceedings than the jeweler with \$1,700 total. "I talked to others throughout the show and didn't personally speak to anyone who was satisfied with sales." (Obviously, he/she didn't talk to a majority of his/her auditor peers or either of the exhibiting State Reporters.) He/she also asked, "How could this show be rated [#8 on the 200 Best's fine art list]?"

The answer, of course, is because it was the 8th most-profitable 2013 show for SA readers. And as explained repeatedly, the 200 Best is not, never has been and never will be a list of shows at which all

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exhibitors are guaranteed to make a profit. Why? Because such a list does not exist outside Fantasyland.

Next up were attendance (6.5), weather (6.9) and advertising (9.2). Scores for attendance were somewhat muted compared to what we've previously seen, but that's to be expected given the move. Also, the printmaker felt that the horse-racing track that surrounds the new location "...added atmosphere and interest," and the fiber artisan thought that iffy weather perhaps kept people away.

Rounding out the other categories and their scores were: quality of work (8.3), balance of mediums (9.0), prestige of show (8.2), layout (8.6), load-in/-out (8.8) and parking (9.5). Flying against the opinion of all of his/her fellow reviewers, the low-selling jeweler claimed his customers berated the overall quality as "poor," but the woodworker with \$3,200 total said, "This is a high-end art show..."

In the end, more than 70 percent of these exhibitors would give Rio Grande's new location another shot when the show's 27th annual edition runs on October 2-4 & 9-11.



► September 20-21, Armonk Outdoor Art Show, Armonk. Contact: Judy Moniz, Friends of the North Castle Public Library Inc., One Boulder Trail, Armonk, NY

10504. Phone: 914-273-9706. Email: info@armonkoutdoorartshow.org. Website: www.armonkoutdoorartshow.org. Application fee: \$30. Space fee: \$325-\$775. Space size: 12x12 to 12x24. 100% outdoors. Exhibitors: 205. Attendance: 7,000 (source: staff). Admission: \$10.

Compiled from *FastAudit* reports

We received strong feedback from the Armonk Outdoor Art Show's 53rd annual outing, and almost all of it was positive. Unsurprising, given the event's longstanding reputation for both quality and profitability – with the latter being evidenced by its ranking as the #98 fine art event on 2014's *200 Best*.

The organizers have a lot to do with Armonk's success, and

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