



California Strawberry Festival

NEWS RELEASE

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Artisans From Around The West Show Their Creations At 36th Annual California Strawberry Festival

Oxnard, Calif. (April 10, 2019)—More than 200 artisans from throughout the West will be displaying their goods at the 36th annual [California Strawberry Festival](#), May 18 and 19 at Strawberry Meadows of College Park in Oxnard.

The festival, which attracts nearly 60,000 visitors, features dozens of different kinds of foods and beverages made from fresh strawberries, but it is also known for its eclectic mix of quality artwork, crafts and unique pre-packaged food items.

Many of the artists have been returning to the festival for decades. "Festival goers come specifically to see what kind of new items our long-time artists will bring," says Dana Hale-Mounier, director of Pacific Fine Arts Festivals and coordinator of the festival's arts and craft booths.

For artist [Mishell Swartwout](#), this will be her 22nd year participating in the festival. She lives in Oregon and travels to Oxnard for the festival—the only show she does in southern California. "It is one of my favorites," says Swartwout, whose paintings usually involve cute animals. "The people who attend are having such a great time with all the food, music and activities. The highlight of the show, of course, is all the luscious strawberries." For this year's festival Swartwout created a painting that expresses her love of animals and strawberries (a rabbit holding a giant strawberry). It will be available at the festival in matted prints.

"Unlike online shopping, festivalgoers have the opportunity to engage the artisans," says Hale-Mounier. "Each artist has an interesting background and story to tell. The festival is the perfect way to spend a weekend enjoying a variety of entertainment and plenty of strawberry taste treats for the whole family while also being inspired by our artisans' creativity and passion. And, of course, they'll offer a variety of strawberry-themed designs."

Brain and Heather Gleser, owners of [Harmony Tie-Dyes](#) in Modesto, make tie-dyed apparel for children and adults. Brian Gleser's parents passed down the trade to Gleser and now he is teaching the art of tie-dying to his 10-year-old son. The Glesers will be selling plenty of tie-died strawberry-themed t-shirts and children's dresses. "It takes about three days and a lot of patience to produce a tie-dyed shirt. Strawberries are actually a challenge to create," says Gleser. "Anything with a shape or detail can be tricky." Last year, the Glesers sold out of all their strawberry-themed items. "We've been participating in the California Strawberry Festival for over 30 years," says Gleser. "Regular customers come to the show each year to see what's new in our booth. I've found that people are hungry for a personal connection with the artists. We consider them friends."

Husband and wife team [Ellen McErlane and Dan Abyeta](#) combine his metalsmithing with her lampwork glass designs. They've been exhibiting at the festival for over 20 years. Their home base is in Pollock Pines, just outside of Sacramento, but they also work in Venice, Murano and the Czech Republic. "Each year, we make strawberry-themed creations in Venetian glass and sterling silver jewelry just for the festival," says McErlane.

The festival features more than 50 food booths, each with at least one strawberry dish or drink, live concerts, contests, a build-your-own strawberry shortcake booth, Strawberryland for Kids with rides and attractions and cooking demonstrations.

General admission is \$12, seniors 62 and over are \$8 and children ages 5-12 are \$5. Kids 4 and under are free. Active military and dependents with ID are \$8. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. both days Free Park and Ride "Strawberry Express" shuttles with pickup locations off the 101 Freeway save patrons time and money. Parking onsite is \$10. Tickets are available for purchase in advance online via the website, <https://castrawberryfestival.org>. Toll free information is available at 888-288-9242.

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