



California Strawberry Festival

NEWS RELEASE

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Artisans From Around The West Will Show Off Their Creations At 37th Annual California Strawberry Festival

Ventura, Calif. (Date)--One hundred-fifty artisans from throughout the West will be displaying their goods at the 37th annual [California Strawberry Festival](#), May 20 and 21 at the Ventura County Fairgrounds in Ventura ([10 W. Harbor Blvd., Ventura, CA 93001](#)).

The festival, which attracts nearly 50,000 visitors, features more than 50 food and beverage booths, most with a strawberry dish or drink 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 coming to the festival for years. "We haven't had a festival since 2019 because of the pandemic so there is a lot of excitement by the artists to be back," says Dana Hale-Mounier, director of Pacific Fine Arts Festivals and coordinator of the festival's arts and craft booths.

Crafter [Ray Wood](#) began Brighten Your Life Creations with his wife Gina about 30 years ago. They started by making and selling pottery but evolved to copper metal art, primarily copper wind sculptures. Their son, Zack, joined them 15 years ago.

"Our pieces have been described as unique, desirable and affordable," says Wood, whose family has been displaying their items at the festival since 2004. "We have customers say that they have never seen anything like what we have. We create four or five different types of designs that move with the wind."

Wood says they mostly exhibit at festivals in California and other western states. They attended 14 shows last year. "Festivals are a gathering of all different backgrounds. They bring out the best in people. The interaction between us and customers is always positive. There is also a camaraderie of artists that's important too." To learn more about Brighten Your Life Creations, go to www.bylc.com.

Artist [Michael Phillips](#) will bring his original paintings and prints to the California Strawberry Festival. Each tells a compelling story through Phillips' unique use of color and texture. He has exhibited his works on paper, canvas and metal at the festival since 2013. "I grew up spending a lot of time with my grandmother who was a self-taught artist," explains Phillips. "When I was about five years old, she saw that I was interested in painting. She encouraged me and I've spent the rest of my life as a commercial artist and then as a fine arts artist."

Phillips' designs will also be available on story cards, magnets and tiles at the festival. "I enjoy the Strawberry Festival because the strawberry theme seems to bring out the joy in the attendees," says Phillips. "We normally do about 12 festivals a year traveling all over the country. It's a good way to meet new collectors and get the work out in front of a wide variety of people." Phillips' designs can be seen at www.artofmichaelphillips.com.

"Festivals like the California Strawberry Festival give shoppers an opportunity to get an up-close look at items before buying. They can talk with the artisans to learn more about their work and their purchases supports these talented small makers. It's an entire experience that you just don't get when shopping online," says Hale-Mounier.

The 37th Annual [California Strawberry Festival](#) will also feature live entertainment, kids' Strawberryland fun zone, Ninja Nation obstacle course, build-your-own strawberry shortcake and strawberry-themed contests. Local growers will sell these vine-ripened strawberries at the festival in flats. (1/2 tray and full tray).

General admission is \$15, active military and family with ID and seniors 62 and over, \$10, youth ages 5 to 12, \$8 and children four and under are free. Limited onsite parking is \$20. Four free shuttle locations are nearby and an Amtrak station is onsite.

Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. both days. For more information, go to <https://www.castrawberryfestival.org>.

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