

24 Editor's Note

27 Tapas

What's new at **Explora**; an insider's guide to attending a **NM United game**; ABQ leaders and educators celebrate **50th Anniversary of Bless Me, Ultima**; **New Mexico Wine Festival** returns after 3 year hiatus; Art Meets History at **516 ARTS**.

42 Faces and Places

58 Datebook

80 ABQ's New(ish) Restaurants

The post-pandemic explosion of new spots to dine has been something to behold. Check out the **more than 100 restaurants** that have arrived in just the past couple of years (okay, three years).

107 People

108 Albuquerque the Interview

Monte Skarsgard rounds up produce and meats from local growers and ranchers to deliver to your doorstep through his natural grocery service, **Skarsgard Farms**.

114 Personality

Kristelle Siarza founded the **Asian Business Collaborative** to help local Asian and Pacific Islander businesses maneuver through challenges that make them vulnerable.

118 Behind the Scenes

Guitar teacher **Darryl Dominguez** has inspired students to strum their way to fame.





A Thousand Lessons

Guitar instructor Darryl Dominguez celebrates 35 years of teaching local students to freely pursue their musical dreams.

Darryl Dominguez grabs a guitar from among the three mounted on the wall of his Corrales home studio. He carefully situates the acoustic, six-string Ovation guitar, with the pear-shaped instrument molding perfectly around his thigh. His fingers proceed to perform snippets of a speedy arrangement by the Spanish composer, Albéniz. He suddenly stops. “That sounded awful,” he says, “because I’m not warmed up at all.”

For more than three decades, Albuquerque-area guitar students have been warming up to Dominguez. The former University of New Mexico guitar student realized a passion for teaching early in his music education and has since turned that interest into a lifelong career. “I always romanticized the idea of making it on my own,” says Dominguez, 56. “In the eighth grade, I said, ‘I don’t know how I’m going to do music, but as long as I don’t have to work an eight-to-five, I’ll call that a win.’”

For Dominguez, it all began when he saw Ace Frehley perform on a TV variety show. The Kiss guitarist’s talents proved enchanting to a 12-year-old in need of an outlet. It wasn’t all theatrics, attitude and

rock ‘n’ roll from there on out, however. By the time Dominguez was a senior in high school, he was also listening to Bach. “I was the shyest kid,” says Dominguez. “I was just trying to survive teenage life. The guitar was filling holes, but at the same time, I was very passionate about the music. I loved it. I lived for it.”

The musician has shared his expertise with more than 1,000 students over the years, rewarded with each apprentice’s respective success story. His passion helped pave the way for his teaching. Yet, instruction was never intended—Dominguez just happened to stumble upon teaching as a career.

Dominguez attended UNM and ma-

jored in acoustic guitar performance before eventually earning a master’s degree in classical guitar performance. He has taught music theory and ear training at the College of Santa Fe, and served as an assistant in the guitar department at UNM. Dominguez began teaching private lessons in 1986 while still a student himself. The position was a natural, unexpectedly enjoyable fit.

Due in part to his vast knowledge of different genres and styles, Dominguez says he had the confidence and experience to make it on his own—and attract aspiring guitarists. Bandaloop Records artist Kate Vargas was one of Dominguez’s students as a teenager. “I had a (music) theory background and so we didn’t go that route,” says Vargas, now based in New York. “He was like, ‘I want you to want to play, so what do you want to play?’ That’s certainly what I needed. He pushed me in the right direction.”

Dominguez is able to adjust to what resonates with each student, but his at-



titude and approach always remain concrete. Motivation is vital to the success of method, and each student comes to him with a different intention or life situation—he just tries to elevate the moment. With Vargas, she didn't need the rigidness of restraints, she needed a personalized challenge, says Dominguez. He encouraged her to perform her original material, something she had never fathomed at the time, at the annual community recital he organizes. She now has four studio albums to her name.

Other success stories have accumulated over the years for Dominguez's students. "He has so many strengths as a teacher, like his open-mindedness to everything. He's able to really share his passion of music and understand the passions of others," says Stewart Tuttle, an ABQ native who took lessons for five years from Dominguez before heading off to find fame in Hollywood. He now makes a liv-

ing operating a recording studio in Los Angeles, yet still periodically video-chats with Dominguez for refresher instructions. "He just had so much knowledge. It poured gasoline on a fire that I had sparked inside of me," says Tuttle. "Much of how I'm succeeding today, working with artists one-on-one in the studio, comes from those lessons that I had with Darryl."

Dominguez has been able to establish those cherished bonds by first making sure the teacher gets to know the student before deciding on a curriculum. He asks each new student what they would like to play and assures them that nothing is out of reach. Once the student is comfortably settled, Dominguez will listen to the song of choice, dissect it by ear, and then start playing it as if he knew it all along, eventually writing and printing out the tablature for the student.

Then he inserts technical instruction

and theory into the lesson. Since he is using the student's selection as a base, the lessons tend to be more enjoyable. "Everyone's different ... but you're not going to get any results chiding them about what they should be doing or not be doing. The main thing is to motivate them while they're here," says Dominguez, whose aim is to have each student perform their track at the annual recital.

In these times of social-distancing, Dominguez says he has adapted to virtual learning. Many of his students now take lessons via a video service, and the guitarist is set to start recording classes to place on YouTube. But despite the modern classrooms, the teaching methods—and results—remain the same. "He set my standard for musicality," says Vargas, who is currently doing a 2022 West Coast music tour. "That's how you do it, that's what a musician is." —CARL KNAUF