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## COACHELLA

"For Coachella, people go to have an experience that's going to be unlike any experience that they can get at home. The lineups are less and less important," said David Brooks, managing editor of trade magazine Venues

Amenities include boutique shopping and a farmers market. And this year, Coachella also is catering to foodies and beer lovers with new concessions where they can indulge their taste buds with dishes such as grilled pork seasoned with lemongrass and basil or a handcrafted brew.

It's also a chance for some festival immersion.

Coachella and its sister event, the Stagecoach Country Music Festival on April 25-27, each more than doubles the weekend population of Indio. Stagecoach and both Coachella weekends are sold out.

At Coachella, campers from around the world set up tents, creating a community half the size of a city block. At Stagecoach, many families treat the festival as a yearly vacation and stay in recre ational vehicles in the grounds adjacent to the polo field

Many of the fans at both festivals come back year after year.

The repeat business builds a nostalgia factor that keeps bringing people back to escape from their work-centric lives, said Derek Burrill, a UC Riverside associate professor in media and cultural studies

"It is a place where you can go and camp and build a little universe, a microcosmic home for a couple of days, Burrill said.

For Coachella, the population is "most likely the segment of our culture who are inundated, or just stuck in front of a computer screen all day," Burrill said.

Fontana resident Jamie Carper, a 34-year-old paralegal and student, attended Coachella's inaugural year in 1999 and has gone a halfdozen times since. He said he noticed a big change in the festival when it moved from single-day tickets to a threeday admission event. He started meeting people who traveled from as far away as Finland and Australia to experience the festival.

This year, Carper bought a Coachella pass that includes a four-course dinner from Outstanding in the Field in the exclusive VIP area rose garden. He didn't necessarily want the luxury treatment, but the \$600 pass was a way to get a ticket after the festival sold out - in less than three hours.

He usually stays in a hotel. but since all of the lodging in the area has been booked, he will be camping off-site in Indio. "It's my chance to get away from everything,

Part of the Coachella experience is that concertgoers can spend all three days of a festival weekend without ever leaving the grounds. The on-site tent campers arrive Thursday and set up next to



The crowd goes wild for Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros during the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival in Indio in 2010.



A screenprinter creates a customized Coachella t-shirt at the Coachella Boutique.

The tent community has access to portable showers and multiple general stores on site. Campers can shop at a farmers market for fresh food. They can choose among performers on six stages and, after the music has wrapped for the night, there's a silent disco: Campers can dance all night wearing headphones so they don't disturb those trying to

The whole thing is like its own city," said frequent Coachella-goer and Springs resident Orlando

## **FOODIE WONDERLAND**

This year's festival features hip-hop group Outkast, modern progressive rock band Muse and indie rock darling Arcade Fire, but visiwill find pictures and profiles

of chefs and pop-up restaurants that are even more extensive than those of the per-

formers. Some of the restaurants are for the VIPs, but the array on the general festival grounds will be expanded,

London chef Ben Spalding, who has worked in multiple Michelin-star restaurants, is bringing his Stripped Back concept - refined street food made in kitchens without proper fridges or freezers to the everyman's festival grounds.

Likewise, popular LA spot Night + Market will be represented in the general area, bringing Thai specialties such as "Hey-Ha" party wings and Isaan-style sausages, to the Coachella mass-

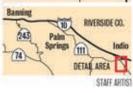
Among the VIP offerings tors to the event's website are dishes from Chef Josef



Omar Chavez, left, buys a date shake from Jessica Duenow



Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival



take items from his three downtown LA restaurants, Báco Mercat, Bar Amá and Orsa & Winston,

The expansive array of cuisine may be new to Coachella, but the food emphasis already has taken hold elsewhere. Coachella actually is playing catch-up, Brooks

He said other festivals already have figured out that there's money to be made on the auxiliary revenues. At San Francisco's Outside Lands, food and wine are ma-Centeno, whose menu will jor components of the experi-

at the Shields Date Gardens booth during the 2012 festival. ence, for example. Outside Lands even has an on-site

sommelier. It's a ready-made market, Brooks said, because people who go to Coachella want to spend money on good quality food and beverages.

## **BOTTOMS UP**

Another new Coachella festival amenity is a craft beer area, where fans can knock back more than the standard Heineken — a staple because the company is a Coachella sponsor. brews have yet to be an-nounced, so beer aficionados will have to use their imaginations for now.

"The lineup of the beers is being treated like a talent lineup," Brooks said.

For Thomas White, of Boston, Coachella has been his yearly vacation since 2007. The 31-year-old clinical studies associate will retire from the fest after this year because of the cost of traveling to the festival and because he wants to visit Europe and Australia. He estimated that he spends \$1,000 on a ticket, condo rental and flight and almost another \$1,000 on the rental car, gas, food, alcohol customers. and miscellaneous.

For his final trip to Indio, White is excited about the ence," White said. new food options and the fact that he can sip a beer other

## IF YOU GO

WHEN: April 11-13, April 18-20, Empire Polo Club

WHERE: 81-800 Avenue 51, India **ADMISSION:** General passes are sold out, but check secondary markets at your own risk. Some passes paired with Outstanding in the Field dinners are available for \$600 for general admission and

INFORMATION: www.coachella-

### A SAMPLING OF THE FOODIE SPOTS AT COACHELLA 2014

Crossroads Kitchen, Los Angeles Eveleigh, West Hollywood Goldie's, Los Angeles Băco Mercat, Bar Amá, and newlyopened Orsa & Winston by Josef Centeno, Los Angeles Mexicali Taco & Co., Los Angeles Night + Market, West Hollywood Stripped Back, London, England KazuNori, Los Angeles Semi Sweet bakery, Los Angeles The Church Key, Los Angeles Tony's Darts Away, Burbank Mohawk Bend, Echo Park Beer Belly, Los Angeles Salt & Straw Ice Cream, Portland,

Bon Puf Cotton Candy, Los Angeles Clover juice shop, Los Angeles

than Heineken.

"I don't care how much it costs," White said.

The festival also will offer a few high-end cocktails ca-tering to fans of mezcal, rum and whiskey. The cocktails will be curated by the establishments of Cedd Moses, who owns some of the hippest bars in LA, and served in

the VIP rose garden area. Ultimately, the newest amenities are only part of what organizers are striving for with Coachella. The music put the festival on the but the whole entity i what brings back the repeat

"I go every year - it's literally the greatest experi-

Contact Vanessa Franko a 951-368-9575 and vfranko@pe.com

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